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# The Enrichment of Life

## *Ten Chapel Talks*

PAUL N. ELBIN

President, West Liberty State College

ASSOCIATION PRESS

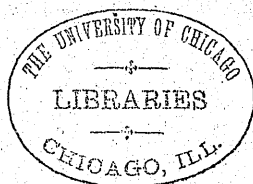
347 Madison Avenue

New York 17, N. Y.

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## Preface

EVERY SPEAKER knows how difficult it is to reproduce in manuscript form an address delivered from notes. During the delivery of a public speech, a speaker often convinces himself that spontaneous phrases and chance illustrations surpass anything that was planned in advance; but a little research may prove otherwise.

I experimented twice with the recording of addresses delivered extemporaneously—that is, from notes. One was a college commencement address; the other was a broadcast address at a church. The delivery of both talks was considered successful. But the manuscripts typed from the recordings! They were impossible; they were choppy and repetitious. My only satisfaction came from the realization that they were, at least, grammatical.

This is by way of explanation for the style of the ten "chapel talks" in this volume. They are not shorthand reproductions of actual talks. The talks, as you have them, were prepared from the outlines used in public delivery. The manuscripts are longer than the talks, for more supporting material in the form of quotations is used. I have felt free to use longer quotations than would have been advisable for a student audience.

No attempt has been made to follow any sequence in the ten chapel talks except the school year. About half the talks have religious themes, but they are not sermons in the formal sense. Back of all the talks is the idea that the educational process is the enrichment of life.

My hope is that *The Enrichment of Life* will prove interesting, not only to those college students who first heard the talks in Academy Hall, but to many high-school and college students throughout America, and to the persons whose privilege it is to teach them or speak with them.

PAUL N. ELBIN

West Liberty State College  
West Liberty, West Virginia



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# I. Education for What?

## AN ADDRESS FOR THE OPENING OF A SCHOOL YEAR

ENOUGH TIME HAS NOW ELAPSED to make it permissible for me to reveal the contents of a letter I received several years ago from the father of a boy in our college. This is the way the letter ran:

Dear Mr. President:

I have a boy in your college [name deleted, of course] who has caused me considerable worry and anxiety. This boy has been in school all his life, ever since he was six years old. The last two years of his high-school career were spent in..... High School because we were led to believe it was a particularly good high school, but even there he flunked. Since then he has had one year in the state university and three years at West Liberty. The net results of all these years: he is no good for anything except reading magazines and smoking cigarettes. We know that he doesn't work in school, and he won't work at anything out of school. School only means for him just a good loafing place. The boy's education, which, alas, is very meager, has cost more than the home and the farm and everything else we've got around here

would sell for; and now, when he is almost 22 years old, lacking only 3 months of it, and weighs 200 lbs., he couldn't hold a job on relief.

Yours very truly,

C. J.

Mr. C. J. is not the only father to raise the question: "Education for what?" The question is asked by businessmen, laborers, journalists, and militarists. Any embarrassment to educators is the result of their confusion of purpose. We expect a carpenter to have a rather precise notion of his work, but society has sometimes been content to give employment to persons who simply "keep school."

It is a good question: "Education for what?" I shall attempt an answer to the question, although I should like to start indirectly by eliminating three possible answers that are dangerous to Americans and their much discussed "way of life."

1. *Education for Death.* There is strong demand for a military "education" for all American boys. This demand is supported by the fact that military training instils habits of posture, endurance, obedience, and subservience to rank. Aside from these alleged benefits to individuals, there is the further claim of our seven-ocean Navy for crews and the claim of the Army for outpost garrisons throughout the world.

In the debate over military "education," the issue should be clear: are we discussing national policy, or are we discussing educational philosophy? In wartime, national policy dominates everything. The boys were not taken out of the colleges and put into military service in 1942 on the basis of any educational philosophy; the obvious truth is that national policy required millions of soldiers, sailors, and air-

men. The training in military science that they received was educational only in a very narrow and derivative sense. An American boy in the Army may have got to India and may have learned much in his travels, but his country did not send him to India to have him meet Gandhi or to study Hindu art. Indeed, even the generals prayed that the induced lust for killing should perish with the enemy. If our nation has a peacetime policy requiring military training for millions, there is little to debate; but if the question can be argued on the basis of a proper educational philosophy for a democratic state, military training may be shown to be training for a certain specific, disagreeable job, and not an adequate form of education.

Our forefathers were not fools; they knew that democracy is not safe in the company of militarism. While they were sensible enough to compromise this faith in time of war, they were idealistic enough to return to democracy with the coming of peace. Twelve million young men engaged in practice killing was the necessity of war, but it would be tragedy for America and the world if young men must accept a system of perpetual "education" for death.

2. *Education for Jobholding.* There is an increasing clamor for vocational education. I can understand much of it; it is the inevitable reaction to aimless education. But I am also disturbed by it; some of it comes from the type of citizen that has, for over a century, opposed democracy in education. Governor Berkeley of Virginia is the American ancestor of this type of citizen. To this kind of American, "education" for the boys and girls of the masses is all right so long as it consists of training for the mines, mills, offices, stores, farms, and military establishments. The emphasis is strongly on the vocational.

The powerful truth is, however, that if we sincerely want democracy, we must exert every effort to help American youth *to understand and to think*. It is not enough that they should know how to dig coal, raise potatoes, or operate a bomber; to the limits of their capacities, they should be educated for democratic citizenship. In 1787 Thomas Jefferson, then in Paris, wrote to James Madison:

Above all things, I hope the education of the common people will be attended to; convinced that on this good sense we may rely with the most security for the preservation of a due degree of liberty.

If it is all that a nation provides for the children of the poor, a narrow, vocational education is a slave education. Tyrants perpetuate themselves through the ignorance of their slaves.

3. *Education for a Soft Life*. The *New Yorker* reported that when a mother threatened to spank her young daughter if the latter didn't obey, she got this reply: "What—in this country?"

There will always be those in this country who pervert liberty into license or into laziness. I have known college students who have implied that, as a reward for living, the country should endow them with venetian shades, a private swimming pool, and a maid. To assume that such attitudes will be discarded as a result of experience is too optimistic. We could find a sizable number of men and women with plenty of experience in living who, nevertheless, look to the Government for the "security" they might have achieved for themselves.

Education should deliberately debunk the illusion of an American aristocracy of idleness. I propose that the state-

ment which Thomas Henry Huxley wrote in 1877 be placed daily before the students and teachers of America:

Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not.

Such a motto would have great influence on educational philosophy. Even in "this country," people have to do things they do not want to do at times when they do not want to do them. Possibly we should do well to introduce this particular fact of life into the curriculum a little earlier than at present.

#### THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATION IS THE ENRICHMENT OF LIFE

Having paid my respects to the heresies of education for death, jobholding, and easy living, I am ready for my answer to the question: "Education for what?" *Education is the enrichment of life.*

It is similar to the enrichment of white bread. From the standpoint of appearance, external or internal, bread looks the same whether or not it has been "enriched." But the difference in nutritional value, experts say, is considerable. The enrichment of a human being through education is comparable. A baby is valuable mainly because of its potentialities. Education is the process by which life is enriched as capacities for more and more significant enrichment emerge. By analogy, I speak of the vitamins of education—those elements of a complete human life that can develop only through the enriching process of education.

1. *Vocational Competence.* Surely no one can claim to be educated who is unable to do anything that the world needs to have done. The needs of the world are many and

varied, and the person who is helpless in their presence cannot stand in the company of the educated. Vocational competence is one of the indispensable vitamins with which education enriches life. To be sure, genuine competence in vocational matters is not customarily gained either in college or in professional school; but schooling should not be thought of as anything more than the foundation of education.

A girl who can manage a home, cook meals that are attractive and nutritious, and help keep her husband fit for wage earning is certainly as useful to society as a girl who can teach school, play a violin, or sell dresses. There is employment for persons who can put the right figures in the right columns, and there is employment for persons who express themselves in creative writing.

A sound mind in a sound body is not all that the world requires of us. These are simply the tools that we sharpen for the task. The pilot of a great ship of the air must have a sound mind in a sound body, but he must have more: he must have trained his mind and his body for the specific responsibility that he has accepted.

2. *Historical Perspective.* One of the valuable educational vitamins is the one that develops the ability to understand the present in the light of the past. The importance of such a link between *now* and *then* may be illustrated easily by imagining, for a minute, that suddenly you have forgot everything you know. Now you do not know where to go for food when you are hungry. You do not know where to go to sleep when drowsiness overcomes you. You cannot understand why that stranger should be calling you "darling."

People who live in the present without a knowledge of the past are just as helpless, but usually they do not know it. Millions of people united on a program of defeating and then disarming Germany, Italy, and Japan; they had the



notion that this was the way to peace and prosperity. The fact that Germany was judged the aggressor so recently as 1914 was to them conclusive evidence that Germany is the black sheep of the human family. But what did they think about Italy and Japan? In the conflict of 1914 to 1918, these two nations were ranged with the side of light in the conflict with darkness. Reflection on this fact may be the beginning of historical perspective.

We should know that wars occur as the result of certain economic, geographical, and historical conditions. Hitlers are not so much causes as results, especially in our modern world. I doubt whether the typical German is any more war-like than the citizen of most other lands. It was France, under a man named Napoleon, that went the Hitler way in the last century. Sweden—yes, neutral Sweden—in the seventeenth century, under Gustavus Adolphus, invaded the heart of Europe, set up court at Mainz, staged a triumphal entry into Munich, defeated both Russia and Poland, and scared France into a favorable treaty. In the sixteenth century the Turks defeated Hungary, laid siege to Vienna, and even marched into Germany. Following 1492 Spain became the first global power, occupying parts of South America, Central America, North America, the Philippines, Italy, and the Netherlands.

If we have historical perspective, we are not so ignorant as to suppose, as many men did in 1919, that victory over the aggressor of the moment is a perpetual guarantee of peace and happiness. In 1914 it was Germany, but not Japan; in 1941 it was Germany *and* Japan. There are many people in the world today who fear that tomorrow it may be the United States. Have we not lived long enough as a race to know that only through world organization can we hope to stabilize international relations?

Perhaps the terrific pressure of the history that the world has lived since 1914 has produced historical perspective on the part of some of our people. I am concerned, however, about the mild interest taken by most American youth of college age in the great issues of war and peace. Can this disinterest be the result of our years of isolation from 1919 to 1939? Is it the result of our geographical remoteness from potential enemies? Is it the fault of a superficial teaching of history? Or could it be a sort of "theirs-not-to-reason-why" attitude?

After all, what kind of a world have we fought for? Did American soldiers go to India to keep Japanese imperialism out or British imperialism in? Did they go to Africa to drive out Germans and Italians or to bring in the British? Many were not sure. There was, of course, sufficient incentive for fighting in the realization that Germany and Japan could not become so strong as they desired without endangering our national security.

There will be a spiritual and moral collapse of a most profound nature, I am confident, if it develops that our costly victory is temporary. Once before in our time we broke faith with those who died for us. *Life* put it this way:

We wanted to lick the Kaiser, but the fact is that we realized no purpose whatever for the boys who were killed in 1918. We came back home and washed our hands. We said that the rest of the world could go to hell. We tried to get richer without even protecting our own people from want.

And then *Life* asked the question that will require a quarter of a century for a reply: "Is that the idea—this time?"

All this has to do with the importance of historical perspective. No one is educated unless he can grasp some of the realities of the present by means of his familiarity with the

past. As Emerson stated it: "The lesson of life is to learn what the centuries have to say to the hours." The vitamin of historical perspective is an indispensable part of the process of educational enrichment.

3. *Scientific Understanding.* It is not likely that the intricacies of modern science will be understood by many people, but it is important that the practical lessons of science be applied to daily living. Not many physiological facts are needed to explain why fresh air is needed in a sleeping room; yet there are plenty of students in college who seem not to be aware of these facts. Not much medical information is required to immunize a person against the blatant claims of the patent medicine sellers; yet millions of Americans are still expecting to find health in bottles and vigor in pills. Not many facts about nutrition are needed to enable any person to provide his body with the kind of fuel on which it operates best; yet a glance around any restaurant will provide evidence that many of us select our food as capriciously as a child might be expected to do.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick tells a story of practical science at work in Corinth, Greece. It seems that in 1918 an American woman succeeded in bringing two thousand children to Corinth from the chaos in Asia Minor. Soon after the children arrived in Corinth, twelve hundred of the two thousand had malaria. Now malaria is not new in Corinth, and many of the natives were resigned to its ravages. But the American woman sent for a nurse of her acquaintance, and the two of them finally persuaded the Government to clean up the entire region. Soon malaria was under control. This illustrates what I mean by "scientific understanding"; it is primarily a working comprehension that certain results come from certain causes.

The story about the farmer who was visiting his college

son in the chemistry laboratory is apropos. Told that they were seeking a universal solvent, a liquid that would dissolve anything, he inquired: "What'll you keep it in?" The farmer had the basis for scientific understanding, one of the essentials of education.

4. *Artistic Appreciation.* Surely no amount of scientific understanding, historical perspective, or vocational competence can compensate for a lack of artistic appreciation. Eyes that see, ears that hear—these are the product of education. It is amazing how, through continuous education, our eyes can bring us more and more delight, even beyond the time when biologically our eyes are at their best. I know a man who only in the past year has discovered birds; he has found new happiness. It is marvelous how, through continuous education, our ears can reveal to us new beauties year after year. A friend of mine has found Brahms within the past few months; a new world of beauty comes to him now through new ears.

The trouble with most of us is that the education of our eyes and ears is terminated too early in life. By twenty-one, many people have decided forever "what they like." They *do* like the poetry of James Whitcomb Riley; they *do not* like the poetry of John Keats. They *do* like the music of Tschaikowsky; they *do not* like the music of Bach. They *do* like the gospel songs of W. H. Doane; they *do not* like the hymns arranged from Handel and Haydn.

We are apt to have an occupational sense of beauty. A farmer may find artistic satisfaction in a handsome horse or a prize sheep and ignore the beauty to be experienced in music. A housewife may "rave" over a beautiful bedspread or birthday cake and place an object of framed hideousness over her mantel. A scholar may find beauty in words and never notice the rose just outside his study window. A car-

penter may thrill at an object of beauty that his hands have created, but he may be dead to the solemn beauty of a winter sunset. A college student may be so satisfied with popular tunes as to miss completely the enduring value of good music. One such intolerant youth asked her Dad if he ever heard anything so beautiful as the "jive" record she was playing. He said he had, once, when he was driving a truck loaded with hogs and collided with a truck hauling empty milk cans.

The possibilities for the enrichment of life through artistic appreciation are limitless. One has only to select the kind of beauty that satisfies himself most completely in order to comprehend what enrichment can come from adding new appreciations as life goes on.

5. *Spiritual Consciousness.* Believers in mottoes may take heart from the fact that I have never forgotten these lines on a calendar that hung in my home when I was a high-school boy:

Every man takes care that his neighbor shall not cheat him. But a day comes when he begins to care that he does not cheat his neighbor. Then all goes well. He has changed his market-cart into a chariot of the sun.

These lines describe the birth of spiritual consciousness. Every human being wants food for himself. When he desires that there shall be food for others, and desires it earnestly, he has, as Paul describes it, "put away the old man . . . and put on the new man that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." When a man gains spiritual consciousness, he has become, as Jesus promised, a son of God. He has renounced his animal ancestry in favor of his God destiny. Henceforth his body shall be the holy temple of his soul. Hereafter the desires of the "flesh" shall serve the aspirations of the soul.

I am calling this kind of life enrichment "spiritual con-

sciousness." I should have called it "religion," except for the fact that many people are still thinking of religion as a list of things *not* to do. Their attitude is similar to that of the girl who wrote to Dorothy Dix: "I am a young girl of sixteen and do not know what is wrong to do. Please tell me everything that is wrong and bad, so that I won't do it." Unfortunately, religion in the minds of many people means a negative approach to life. The development of spiritual consciousness—real religion—is, of course, the ultimate enrichment of life. It transforms human life from the earth to the skies, from the clod to the cloud, from the beast to the god.

*Time* reported one week an act of selflessness revealing unsuspected spiritual consciousness. Just as a subway train was rushing into a Brooklyn station, a man fell from the platform to the tracks below. To the horror of the waiting crowd, two men instantly leaped to the tracks and swung the unconscious body to the narrow space between the tracks and the platform. When the train had screeched to a stop, the motorman got out, expecting to see three mangled bodies. To his amazement, he saw that all three men were miraculously saved by the shallow overhang of the platform. Slowly the train was moved past the men. The still unconscious man was then lifted to the platform. The two rescuers were scarcely scratched, and they tried to sneak away through the crowd. But a newspaperman stopped them and asked for information about the "heroes." "Hero?" repeated one of them. "All we did was to get the guy off the tracks."

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, 'Lord, when saw we thee hungry and fed thee, or athirst and gave thee drink?' " So, evidently, it always has been. The priest and the Levite pass by on the other side; the Samaritan proves his spiritual consciousness.

## IN CONCLUSION

Education for what? For life enrichment, for life in abundance. Naturally, such an education is not measured in terms of semesters or credit hours; but the responsibility of teachers and schools is not therefore decreased, but rather increased. The school part of education is the laying of the foundation for the always incomplete but always building structure of vocational competence, historical perspective, scientific understanding, artistic appreciation, and spiritual consciousness.

If this is true, the history teacher has more to do than prepare students for an examination on 732, 1066, 1215, 1492, and 1776. The teacher of literature, concerned about life enrichment for all of life, will be more interested in the glow of a pupil caught by the beauty of a single phrase than by the accumulation of scores of mechanically prepared book reports. The science teacher will look upon his task as an opportunity to bring release from age-old superstitions; and to bring mental health and vitality to young people who, through science, have come to feel at home in the world in which they live. The teacher of religion—and all good teachers are teachers of religion—will know that spiritual consciousness is developed by a kind of spiritual contagion.

Good lives breed good lives. As Jesus drew men unto himself, and they became more like their Master, so the hope of education rests with teachers. Theirs is the magnificent privilege of opening the books of all time, releasing the music of the masters, bringing science into daily life, making history serve society, and bringing God to man.



## II. The Constitution and the People

### A TALK FOR CONSTITUTION DAY

IT WOULD BE VERY UNFORTUNATE for the United States of America if the Constitution should ever be elevated to a place of uncritical examination; if the time should arrive when the Constitution, with its present Amendments, should be considered the final and perfect evolution of government; or if ceaseless thought for the improvement of democratic government were to be interrupted by reverence for a static instrument.

We could easily end the usefulness of our Federal Constitution by overveneration for it. It has served our nation for more than a century and a half—longer than any other similar instrument of government in the world—chiefly because it has remained flexible and adaptable to the changing demands of a growing civilization. For this reason I cannot



rejoice in some current platitudes concerning the Constitution. True service to the Constitution involves, most fundamentally, the universal recognition that it is an instrument through which government may continue to serve the needs of each succeeding generation, without the necessity for violent and destructive change.

This is by way of prologue, for no one joins more heartily than I in the annual celebration of the signing of our Federal Constitution. Annually, we set apart a day for celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on the Fourth of July, 1776. Will anyone deny the equal importance of the document signed in the same city on September 17, 1787? Certainly we should be ungrateful if this anniversary slipped by year after year without notice. It is proper that Americans should express individual and representative appreciation for the precious document that has led our nation through the problems and trials of more than one hundred and fifty years, and that remains today the nation's guide to continued democracy.

We do not today dedicate the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence to their great assignment. The men who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the original and very uncertain outcomes of these documents dedicated them beyond our power to add or to detract. The public officers of our land who have defended them during more than one hundred and fifty years; the Presidents, the judges, and the Congressmen who have translated the Declaration of Independence into liberty and the Constitution into law—a perfect unity of ordered freedom—have completed the act of dedication. To paraphrase Lincoln once more: "It is for us rather to be dedicated." The Constitution will not be any wiser nor the Declaration any braver for our

having spoken today in their honor. But we may be braver and wiser and better citizens for having taken time to consider what the two documents have meant and continue to signify to us and to the entire world.

I hope I am not mistaken in my thought that most of you would rather read the historical background of the Constitution for yourself than to have me boil it down beyond interest or accuracy in these few minutes. The whole topic is fascinating. The literature is abundant and accessible. But let me mention a few facts of undoubted interest.

The youth of the framers of the Constitution is worth notice. Of the fifty-five delegates who attended the sessions, only twelve were more than fifty-five years of age. The man who became known as the "Father of the Constitution," James Madison, was thirty-six. Alexander Hamilton, who was the sole signer for the State of New York, was only thirty years of age at the time.

But youth does not necessarily indicate liberalism. I suppose it is commonplace to remark that the men who wrote the Constitution were not in the main the men whose agitation brought on the Revolution, thus making both necessary and possible the forming of a union with a written constitution. The analogy is imperfect, but the gathering in Philadelphia from May until September, 1787, was not altogether unlike the United States Chamber of Commerce of today.

For the most part, the delegates represented wealth. They were selected by legislatures elected by property holders. One of their chief interests was the formation of a stable government that would guarantee the revival of business. Little was said about the "natural rights of man," the philosophical basis for the Revolution, which was expressed daringly and forcibly in the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson re-

mained in France during the fateful summer of 1787; and Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock were not sent to the Convention. But thus it always is. Dreamers start great movements, and practical men consolidate their gains. The venerable Benjamin Franklin dignified the floor of the Constitutional Convention, and George Washington lent the prestige of his sainted name to the presidency of the body.

The gap between the stated purpose of the Revolution as set forth in the Declaration of Independence, with its lengthy bill of complaints against an autocratic government, and the proposed Constitution signalizing the accomplishment of that purpose is clearly shown in the omission of those guarantees that were later added as the first ten Amendments. In their eagerness to end national confusion, everybody apparently forgot that a revolution had just occurred because natural rights were violated: freedom of speech; freedom of worship; right to jury trial; freedom from excessive bail, fines, or punishment; freedom from interference by the military; freedom from unjust invasion of the privacy of the home. These and other grievances that had been used to excite enthusiasm for the war were promised as an afterthought in order to secure the ratification of the Constitution.

All this is not entirely pleasant; yet in no way does it disparage the usefulness of the Constitution. It was simply the product of the temper of 1787 as the Declaration of Independence was the product of the spirit of '76. As a matter of historical record, both of these history-making documents were utterly unique. In their honest breaking of new paths of government, they were like the experience of the American State Department in 1919. Robert Whitney Imbrie had been sent to Finland to protect United States Government

food supplies. The task was so difficult that Imbrie cabled for permission to fly the American flag over the food. Patiently at first, but later impatiently, he waited for a reply. Finally it came: "Permission denied. No precedent." Imbrie immediately replied: "Precedent established. Flew flag at 9 this morning."

It should be a matter of great satisfaction to us to know that the American people hold the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution in equal reverence. A democracy consists of the proper balance of human rights and property rights. They are not divorced; they are united for life. These two documents, symbolizing these two primary rights, belong in the same shrine; and the real shrine of American liberty under law is the heart of the patriot.

George Washington, the Pinckney papers reveal, was dubious of the permanence of the new Constitution. He is reported to have said that he did not "expect the Constitution will exist more than twenty years." He had heard the bitter debates; he knew that every clause was a compromise; and he had noticed the influential men who were waiting to defeat ratification. He had presided when the most controversial issue before the Convention was settled by a five-to-four decision—five states against four states. No wonder Washington was pessimistic!

But later John Marshall was to prophesy that the Constitution would "approach immortality as nearly as human institutions can approach it." And Marshall was right. The provision for amending the Constitution, exercised twenty-one times in one hundred and fifty years, provided for elasticity and change. Realizing that even the Ten Commandments have had to be interpreted, through the years the justices of the Supreme Court, the guardians of the charter of orderly

government changing orderly, have practiced the dictum that "the Constitution is what the judges say it is." Of course! Else the Constitution would have cracked and broken into a million pieces by now.

Through the foresight of the wise men who framed the Constitution, it has kept pace with the pioneers who have spread the American nation from the Eastern coast to the deserts of the Southwest; the forests of the North; and the mountains, plains, and coast of the West. Changed as we have been from rural to urban, from agricultural to industrial, from pre-scientific to ultra-scientific, from provincial to cosmopolitan, still the Constitution proves its power to

. . . form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.

On September 17 we look back with genuine respect, admiration, and gratitude to the men who, over a hundred and fifty years ago today, presented to an expectant populace the fruits of their labor. Knowing now that time has proved their work, we look forward confidently to the future, praying that a faithful and united nation may, like us, give thanks to almighty God for a Constitution that is the guarantee to free men and women of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.



### III. Who Is a Good Teacher?

#### A TALK FOR AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK

I PROPOSE that we think for a while about teachers. All of us have learned much from teachers—even from poor teachers, though much more from good ones. Some of us have suffered because of the dulness or laziness of certain teachers. Some of us owe the finest elements in our characters to teachers of the type two college alumnae discussed at a class reunion. They were speaking of their Latin professor. He taught a subject that was not very popular; his classes were never crowded. He was never awarded an honorary degree, and he was seldom invited off the campus.

"What did you learn from Professor Brown?" said one old grad to the other.

"I learned to be a man," was the reply.

We can understand that tribute to a teacher. Perhaps we can profit by an attempt to classify and evaluate teachers in the light of our own experience with them.

THE SCHOLARS—WHO TEACH FACTS

I think first of the teachers who are primarily dispensers of information. Henry Seidel Canby, in his educational autobiography, *Alma Mater*, sets forth their educational theory thus:

Plant the seeds of honest fact—declensions, dates, formulas. Reap the crop at examination time, and woe to the boy with an empty basket.

He uses another metaphor to explain the system:

The well-crammed youngster is like a siphon bottle. Press the handle and he fizzes in a welcome relief from the pressure.

Of course this is an inadequate description of the philosophy of education as information. The oldest of all educational philosophies is the one that conceives of education as a means of preserving the knowledge of the race. Professor William Clayton Bower, of the University of Chicago, defines this type of education in these words:

This accumulated knowledge exists in the form of the great traditions of the race—scientific, literary, aesthetic, institutional, politico-social, industrial, and religious. It is the function of education to transmit these traditions from one generation to another. The test of education is the amount of knowledge acquired and the certainty of its recall.

It must be obvious that no later theory of education can entirely abandon this original conception. We shall always need to know the elementary facts of arithmetic, the basic rules for the use of our native tongue, and the meaning of the words we use as symbols of our thoughts and our desires. For a higher plane of life, we need to understand the experience of men with government; and we need to learn how

human beings have developed music, writing, and painting to lift their expression from the grunt and the growl to the realm of civilization. Without facts we are indeed:

An infant crying in the night:  
An infant crying for the light:  
And with no language but a cry.

The failure of teachers who are primarily scholars is the failure to put facts to work. Much as I envy the exalted "experts" of "Information Please" fame, I should never point to them as the type we seek as the product of education. When I learn that a man is an encyclopedia, I want to know what else he is. Browning described with admiration and pathos the death of a grammarian who gave his entire life to the study of a few Greek particles. Since every living human being is indebted to the painstaking scholars of all time, we can all unite in such a song of praise. The tragedy of higher education, however, is the confusion of scholarship with teaching ability. The two are related, but certainly are not the same.

Let me return to the charming and effective style of Henry Seidel Canby. This is how he describes the methods of his college professor of English literature:

How many an English recitation where in sleepy routine the questions went round:—What does our author say about Lucifer's ambitions?—Who was Ben Jonson and what were his relations to Shakespeare? Never in business, in law, even in religion, has there been more sham, bunk, and perfunctoriness. . . . I wonder when I think of men I know who have persisted in this rigamarole for thirty years.

You will be interested in what Bliss Perry thought of such teaching. Dr. Perry was a teacher who was an outstanding



success at Williams, at Princeton, and at Harvard. Borrowing a phrase from the Prologue to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, he has related his life's story in a book called *And Gladly Teach*. Writing of his own college days, he tells this incident:

We were disgruntled to discover later that the prizes in natural history went to the professional prize-winners of our class, who might not know one bird, rock, or flower from another, but who could memorize every word that fell from "Chad's" lips and pass them back to him in neat notebooks and bluebooks.

Speaking with kind reserve of his Greek professor, Dr. Perry says:

His conscientious interpretation of his duty as a teacher left him no time to initiate us into the wonders of Greek literature—even in an English dress.

Ten years after I completed the requirements for the Doctor's degree, I felt the urge to return for a time to the academic atmosphere of a graduate school. I believed that I ought not to expose myself during the precious term to the ordinary routine of such classes as I taught or could visit in my own college. I believed that what I needed was exposure to eminent scholars and teachers of the major fields of learning. Several were scheduled at a great Eastern university the summer of my leave of absence, and I came before them with respect, if not exactly with reverence. Most of them were no more aware of my presence in the classroom than I came to be of theirs. One professor is a Pulitzer prizewinner in history, but his lectures were fatally dull. Another is one of our most discerning literary critics; but when he read as class lectures day after day the galley proofs of his forthcoming book, I could have perished from boredom. Dr. Canby may

have had such teachers in mind when he wrote of the "hard-boiled":

We have the stuff; let the little lambs come and get it if they wish. If they are goats who won't eat good food, that is their affair.

Generally speaking, the men who write the books that we retail in our small colleges are not successful classroom teachers. The ones I refer to paid no attention to the lighting or to the ventilation of the classrooms in which we sat for an hour on hard seats. They made no effort whatever to know us or even to communicate with us. Whether they read or talked, they seemed to be addressing themselves. Perhaps I was wrong to expect teaching from authors and scholars. At any rate, I have developed the firm conviction that devotion to scholarship is basically irreconcilable with devotion to teaching.

I remember that when I was a candidate for the Doctor's degree, I protested against the endless details of the various requirements—perhaps "hurdles" is a more accurate word. I shall never forget the reply of one of my major professors: "Something happens to you while you get your Ph.D." To myself I said: "Well, it won't happen to me." It was becoming evident that the goal of the graduate school was a patented product of patience; that the Ph.D. was a D.D., one "drilled in drudgery."

"We do not turn out high-school graduates; we turn out educated citizens," said an eighteen-year-old high-school valedictorian quoted in *Life*. The statement implies a good theory of education. Education is not something we do to the intellect alone. Stephen Leacock once remarked that the entire remains of an average education can be carried in a pocket notebook. Dr. E. Stanley Jones said all this and more in an

address to the National Education Association: "The important thing at the end of a college education is not what you know, but what you love."

#### THE LAZY—WHO CASH CHECKS AND CHOKE MINDS

Next I think of lazy teachers, those who cash checks and choke minds. I do not listen very sympathetically to the complaints of teachers that jobs are hard to hold. To be sure, there are counties or districts in which politics or religion, or both, determine who shall or who shall not teach in the public schools; but with most teachers, tenure is more secure than it is in the average field of employment.

Success, and therefore security of employment, is more dependent upon accepting community customs for teachers than it is upon good teaching. Stability, co-operation, faithfulness—such stodgy virtues as the milker asks of his cow—these are the ways to long service in the public schools in some communities. The result is a branch of the educational profession known as the "schoolmen." When we say, "He is a schoolman," we indicate about as much relation to real education as if we said of a termite in the basement of a school: "He is a school insect." A man (or a woman) in a school is not necessarily engaged in education; he may be engaged in cashing salary checks and choking young minds.

The idea that indifferent, lazy, dull teachers are merely harmless is effectively disputed by Dr. Canby, who, when writing of certain teachers of his own knowledge, says: "Yet I fear they were not harmless. Their dead hand rests on many a mind yet." That is the unsuspected tragedy in many a classroom. I should sooner recommend dismissal of a teacher for lack of inspiration than for lack of common decency; for the latter would be recognized by all, while the

former might be interpreted as sweetness of spirit and rewarded with a life contract.

When a physician fails, someone dies or is maimed. When a teacher fails, a mind or a soul dies or is maimed; but the sad consequence is not always recognized. When the fault is plain failure to leave a profession in which one does not belong, the fault is criminal. Mere failure to steal, or to commit adultery or murder, is not sufficient indication of success in teaching. It is possible to grow old in the profession, to be retired with honor and a pension, and to be surrounded with the mental and spiritual graves of those we have put to eternal sleep with our laziness, our indifference, and our blindness.

#### THE REFORMERS—WHO LIGHT FIRES

I must not overlook the teachers who are really preachers—the reformers, those who light fires in student minds. They are surely in the minority in every level of the educational system; but they are present, and they are powerful.

Bliss Perry's father was an instructor of political economy, and he must have been the kind of teacher I have in mind. The son describes his father's teaching this way:

On many aspects of his subject he was content with clear and dispassionate exposition. Production and exchange, labor and capital, land and currency and credit, he could discuss with scientific precision and poise. But when he came to foreign trade and American tariffs, he smelled the battle like a war horse. His very bones cried out against "Protection, falsely so called." I had heard all this at home since I had heard anything, and I had no doubt that Father, like his friends W. G. Sumner and David A. Wells, was on the right side of the tariff reform argument. I think so still. But I hated to have my classmates egg him on, by their questions, to more and more dogmatic and extravagant utterance. There

was no help for it. His absolute frankness, his devotion to truth as he saw it, his ethical conviction that tariffs drawn in favor of privileged groups were simply a question of Right and Wrong, made him a formidable advocate, and his wit and humor were weapons that often made the class howl with delight, even though these weapons were turned against their arguments.

Surely you are reminded of some teacher-reformers. Perhaps some Don Quixote teacher of yours struggled against the windmill of alcohol, or tobacco, or caffeine. I had one whose passion was world peace; another who, with equal futility, advocated large families among the educated. In my own teaching, I find myself coming again and again to the idealistic hope that barriers of all kinds among men—barriers of race, religion, nationality—may be weakened or destroyed through a common aspiration and a genuine, understanding tolerance. Although they are not as numerous as some fear, there are professors who preach a gospel of plenty for all through the common ownership of the principal sources of economic power. You will think of teachers who are so convinced of the necessity and the truth of their pet convictions that they are definitely intolerant.

Yet I cannot easily condemn the teacher-reformers. In the eyes of cynics, such teachers are probably adolescent radicals who never matured. Perhaps, on the other hand, they are matured minds that have managed to retain some of the hope without which society would perish. It may be that some unthinking youth will be swept along with the enthusiastic concerns of his instructor; he may become a junior evangelist. I should rather meet a young man possessed of a dream, however, than a young man merely filled with meat and potatoes.

And there is an antidote for teacher-reformer-idealists. Few of us are subjected to one teacher alone. The beliefs,

the faiths, the pet "peeves" or loves, the interests of *many* teachers, are usually brought to bear on us. Montaigne thought that this conflict of instructors was the best way of stimulating thought among students. If he were setting up a Department of Economics, he might employ as instructors such a variety of men as Merle Thorpe, Norman Thomas, Eugene Browder, and Lawrence Dennis. If he were organizing a university Department of Religious Philosophy, he might employ such instructors as Father Sheen, Dr. Fosdick, Rabbi Silver, Gandhi, and Joseph Lewis of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism. Montaigne (who died in 1592) believed that the best environment for the development of individual minds is the welter of controversy. He summed up the outcome like this:

. . . he [the student] will himself choose, if he be able; if not, he will remain in doubt. . . . Bees cull their several sweets from this flower and that blossom, here and there where they find them, but themselves afterward make the honey, which is all and purely their own. . . .

Students gain more from the conflicting viewpoints of enthusiastic and sincere partisans than they do from the mild evaluations of a whole faculty of colorless objectivity. In actual daily living, people are expected to bring facts to a focus on actual decisions, on very real courses of action. The man who is forever weighing the merits of all possible choices is a man who stands still.

#### THE ENTHUSIASTS—WHO MAKE PERSONALITIES

It is likely that most of us have the greatest appreciation for those teachers who are plainly in love with their profession. They are like old Professor Shaler of Harvard. When he told his "old boys" at an annual reunion that he might

be in the world beyond before the next gathering, he continued: "When St. Peter meets me at the gate, I hope he will say, 'Nathaniel, we have a professor's chair waiting for you.' "

Certainly I should rank first in my gallery of great teachers those who fired me with a love of life as they revealed theirs in relation to their chosen field of learning. I never knew what poetry was, beyond Edgar Guest, until I heard a teacher read from Shelley and Keats and Wordsworth. I never saw anything in the majestic Book of Job until I heard a professor recite the Voice from the Whirlwind. My appreciation of music was retarded—I lost years of musical enjoyment—because none of my first teachers, even of music, seemed to be in love with enduring music.

Mary Ellen Chase, both a good teacher and a good writer, knows what I mean. In her excellent book, *A Goodly Fellowship*, she says:

In the classroom of the poor or the mediocre teacher there are always three distinct and distinguishable elements: the teacher, the subject or material which he is endeavoring to teach, and the students. In the classroom of the good teacher there is no such division. The students are caught with the teacher in a common ownership of that which he is at once interpreting and re-creating both for them and for himself. . . .

Dr. Canby is more than a little skeptical of enthusiastic teachers. He says:

And when they had done their work the soil was ploughed up but not planted. They made learning seem desirable, but left it an emotion and a mystery.

If this is true, enthusiastic teachers leave much to be desired. But I am not convinced that it is true of the enthusiasts I have

happily experienced. It is true that most of them are not scholars in the academic sense. They have less to plant than research experts; the difference is that they know that the finest seed in the world is useless unless the soil is prepared for it.

Every teacher has been reminded of Mark Hopkins' unique teaching ability—Hopkins on one end of a log and a student on the other. What made Mark Hopkins a legend among great teachers? Bliss Perry got the answer from an old man who had studied under Hopkins. Hopkins was not a scholar, he reported.

The source of his power was not in his knowledge of books. . . . He taught you nothing *about* philosophy, but he taught you to philosophize. . . . The Doctor's favorite question—"What do *you* think about it?"—was the key to his success as a teacher. . . . To discover that you had a mind—narrow, commonplace, or ill-trained, perhaps, but a mind of your own—was a thrilling experience.

Professor Perry challenges us with another observation:

I admired Father's pioneering energy in seeking out Mark Hopkins' college for himself, instead of following his own father's example and going to Harvard. I still like to meet men who tell me that they went to Amherst because Garman taught there, or to Bowdoin for Hyde, or to Yale for "Billy" Sumner, or to Stanford for David Starr Jordan. It makes education seem real.

For a good many years, there was a teacher at West Liberty State College whose name was Mrs. A. B. Wendt. Dr. William L. Stidger, the famous preacher, writer, and lecturer, and once a pupil of Mrs. Wendt's, tells in *The Christian Advocate* how he was moved to write to her. He was discuss-



ing with friends what they had to be thankful for, and he remarked:

Well I, for one, am grateful to Mrs. Wendt, an old school-teacher who 30 years ago went out of her way to introduce me to Tennyson. She awakened my literary interests and developed my gifts for expression.

"Does this Mrs. Wendt know that she made such a contribution to your life?" someone asked.

"I'm afraid not. I've never taken the trouble to tell her."

"Then why don't you write her? It would certainly make her happy, if she is alive, and it might make you happier, too. Far too few of us have developed the habit of gratitude."

That evening, on the chance that Mrs. Wendt might still be living, I wrote her what I called a Thanksgiving letter.

My letter was forwarded from town to town. Finally it reached her, and this is the note I had in return, in the feeble scrawl of an old woman. It began:

"My dear Willie—"

That in itself was quite enough to warm my heart. Here was a man of 50, fat and bald, addressed as "Willie." I read on:

"I can't tell you how much your note meant to me. I am in my eighties, living alone in a small room, cooking my own meals, lonely and like the last leaf of fall lingering behind.

"You will be interested to know that I taught school for 50 years and yours is the first note of appreciation I ever received. It came on a blue, cold morning and it cheered me as nothing has in many years."

I confess I wept over that note.

Surely you know what I believe is good teaching. Good teaching is the ability some people have to make other people want to learn, to grow, to improve, to desire more and more of the good, and finally of the best; the ability to guide

toward light the feet of those whom they awaken. When a man or a woman can do that, he is a good teacher.

Mary Ellen Chase puts into words what all of us feel about the real teachers who have touched our lives:

The memory of such teachers never fades nor does gratitude toward them ever lessen. When, thirty years after their patient and bountiful ministrations, I stood among the purple flowers of Catullus' home at Sirmione, I felt the presence of Florence Rafter as well as that of the poet. And as I picked anemones blowing among the stones of the ancient theatre at Epidaurus, I thought of John Brackett and of how because of him I should forevermore live in a land of plenty.

The multiplication of teaching aids in our time only makes more important than ever the fact that the one indispensable element in any school is a good teacher. A perfect teacher would be a harmonious blend of all the four types I have described:

1. There would be sufficient scholarship to give content and meaning to enthusiasm.
2. There would be enough acceptance of the imperfect to guarantee forgiveness, sympathy, and relaxation.
3. There would be sufficient concern over *value* to show that the good life is the result of good choices.
4. There would be sufficient enthusiasm to fuse the teacher and the student into one glorious unity of discovery and enjoyment.



## IV. Thoughtful Thanksgiving

A CHAPEL TALK FOR THANKSGIVING WEEK

FREEMAN HOPWOOD once addressed a peculiar letter to a man in the White House, a man who was shortly to write a proclamation for a national day of Thanksgiving—or at least Mr. Hopwood presumed that Mr. Hoover would follow the example of most of his predecessors.

It was back yonder in the happy, happy days before World War II; indeed, in the fondly remembered days before the depression, when President Hoover was the symbol of American prosperity. Mr. Hopwood wrote as the "General Secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, Incorporated." And Mr. Hopwood, assuming modestly to speak for "millions of unorganized atheists," entreated Mr. Hoover to refrain from issuing a proclamation that would violate the principle of the separation of Church and State. Mr. Hopwood evidently knew Mr. Hoover better than his first request would seem to indicate, for he went on to state: "Should our protest go unheeded, we request that

you refer to these catastrophies in the Thanksgiving Proclamation." But I am skipping a little of the letter. A nation that has known depression and war will be interested in the catastrophies that so profoundly moved Mr. Hopwood. He wrote:

The past year brought disaster to many of our people. The Mediterranean fruit fly, invading the state of Florida, threatens to cause a loss of hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

I wonder whether our President received a letter from Mr. Hopwood a few weeks ago. If he did, you and I can guess its contents. It would read something like this:

Mr. President:

Why should we observe a Thanksgiving Day? Who is happy? The global war upset every home, every business, every school—every life. The future is darkly clouded. If there are fools who believe in God and feel thankful to Him, make them happy in their idiotic innocence by proclaiming that this year all Thanksgiving celebrations are to be held in asylums for the insane.

Yours truly,

Freeman Hopwood

Secretary of the American Association for the  
Advancement of Atheism, Incorporated.

If you decided to reply to a letter like that, what would you say? Do you have enough skepticism in your own system to make it a little difficult to get your letter started? I shouldn't be surprised if that isn't the case with a good many religious people. Job, you remember, ran up against the same kind of divine mystery; and in his solemn hour, the Savior of Men plaintively, sincerely, and courageously asked the eternal question of all men of good will: "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

There is an answer to this mood. There are at least good clues to the mysteries of the universe. Men have not lived with one another for thousands of years and slowly discovered what they call God without feeling that a glimpse of eternal truth has been their reward. So let's compose our reply, not to the noisy atheists only, but to the gnawing questions within ourselves, as we approach this day of national thanksgiving.

#### JOY AND SORROW ARE RELATED

Let us affirm boldly what every human being knows to be true: that every cause for sorrow is also a cause for joy. A parent knows that nothing brings greater joy than the good health or the success of a child. On the other hand, because a parent is so emotionally involved in his child and his welfare, the illness, or the disgrace, or the failure of the child may give him pain beyond description. The same person may be both the cause of sublime happiness and the cause of complete misery.

But what are we to do when joy turns to sorrow—cease to be thankful? Job knew better: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Are we to wish that we never knew happiness because part of it has been taken away? I can think of few people who suffered more through bereavement than Alfred Tennyson following the death of his close friend, Arthur Henry Hallam. Hallam had been the very center of life for Tennyson, and when he died Tennyson was tempted to die also. But finally he reasoned:

'Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

If you are worried about someone who is in a place of danger, thank God for that someone to love. If you should

sit by the bedside of a loved one who is ill, thank God for a soul who has reached out even in weakness to bring you through love nearer to him. If you long for "the sound of a voice that is still," thank God for the memory you cherish. Complete the list to fit your needs. You suffer because you love. Yet you know that to live is to love; and to love is to be made both happy and sad.

A word that has come down to us from Greek philosophy occurs to me now. It is a big word for a little way of life. The word is "imperturbability." It simply means the idea of living your own life and never being bothered. Some people seem to be able to refrigerate their souls sufficiently to become pretty good examples of imperturbability. But to the extent that they do so, they die. To live is to love—a friend, a child, a wife, a mother, a church, a nation, God. And to love is to become concerned, concerned to the point where even one's own life becomes a secondary consideration. When we love to this extent, we know what real thanksgiving is; life then gets meaning beyond question. Even in defeat, we can thank God for blessings beyond value.

#### SUFFERING REVEALS GOD

Thus, through thoughtful thanksgiving, we come to the tremendous conclusion that God is revealed through suffering quite as much as through happiness. Without departing from our central theme, we may observe that God has given man the greatest of all gifts: the materials with which to create heaven or hell. The choice is man's. It is to God's sorrow that man has chosen to pray for heaven on earth, but to create hell on earth. Through stupid selfishness, men have tried to build their houses of happiness on the broken backs of their fellow men. Through nationalism distorted

beyond reason, through race prejudice hallowed in its iniquity by generations of oppression, through economic injustice sanctified by law and order, and through religious intolerance devoid of any contact with God, man has proclaimed his atheism and has created here and now the terrors of hell. We need not question the existence of God, or his justice, or his love for the righteous when we see men and nations breaking themselves against his commandments.

The heart of our Jewish-Christian belief about God is our belief in the spiritual unity of the universe. We call this faith "monotheism." We understand that monotheism is a development that came slowly to man's understanding because it ran counter to narrow, geographical sympathies. But never forget this: the race that discovered the oneness of God understood that this faith had a corollary faith—that *monotheism* was of value to man because it meant *monohumanitarianism*.

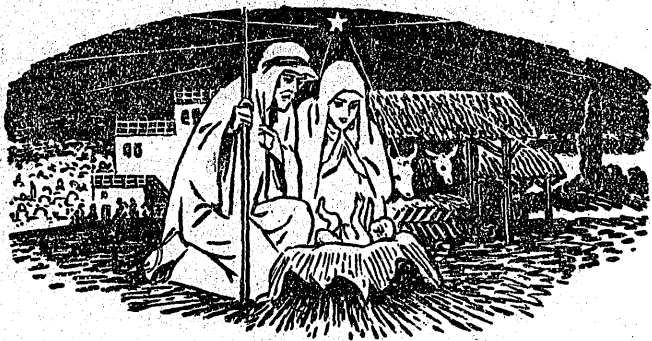
That is a long word, but it stands for an old faith—the unity of all creatures on earth who have spiritual qualities, souls. When men become narrow enough in their human relationships, they automatically renounce monotheism; they become practical atheists, and they invite here and now the hell that their faith produces. And so intertwined are we human beings that the innocent are often hurt along with the guilty. The German babies bombed to death in Berlin were not guilty of Hitler's aggression, but they died because humanity refused to believe in one supreme deity.

Thanksgiving is just as reasonable as ever. Old Uncle Tom used to say when his fellow slaves lamented their troubles: "Think on the mercies, children; think on the mercies." When Gladstone lay ill for six months following an operation, a friend wrote a note of sympathy, to which

the great Christian statesman replied: "No doubt I have suffered a great deal during the last six months, but then I had ten hundred fifty-six months almost without pain."

Optimism, however, is not the chief test of thoughtful thanksgiving. It is rather whether we "show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives." Billy Sunday said that some people were so stingy they would sing "The Ninety and Nine" if you asked them to sing "Old Hundred," and they put a dime in the collection plate to the tune of "God Be with You till We Meet Again." Just how thankful we are for children, for husbands and wives, for fathers and mothers, for churches and for schools, for friends, for inspired musicians and writers, for country, and for God's own family throughout the world will be revealed in our lives day by day from this Thanksgiving Day until the next.





## V. Christmas—Day of Brotherhood

A CHAPEL TALK FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

THE NEW YORK "TIMES" once published, in its Sunday Magazine Section, some reminiscences of a British officer who served in World War I from the beginning in the late summer of 1914. The most interesting thing in his story is the account of what happened in his sector of the line in France on the first Christmas Eve and the first Christmas of the war. It is an astounding story, but its truth has not been questioned.

It was evident from the British side on December 24, 1914, that the Germans were taking Christmas seriously, as Germans have done for a long, long time. Throughout Christmas Eve, the British could hear the German regimental bands playing the Christmas folk music they had given to the whole world: "Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht," "O Tannenbaum." The German boys sang as they had done all their years. Only the sentries seemed to be on duty. All was quiet on the Western front.

Christmas morning dawned cold and still. The guns were silent. The sparrows could be heard as they twittered about in search of food. Thus the stage was set for a series of events that the officer says he holds "to be the greatest tribute to the Christmas spirit our age has known."

Suddenly before the British line two or three German soldiers were seen waving their arms in friendly greeting and yelling in broken English: "Merry Christmas, Tommy!"

Before anybody realized what was happening, men from the trenches on either side were scrambling into No Man's Land laughing, cheering, singing. . . . As though by common consent they came to a halt midway between the trenches. At first with suspicion, then with wonderment, Briton and German surveyed one another. . . .

Then rifles were laid aside, hands were grasped in Christmas friendship, cigars and cigarettes handed about, souvenirs exchanged, the hatreds between the people, under the influence of the "happy morn," evaporating like the clouds of tobacco mounting in the sparkling air above each group. . . .

In the afternoon the unofficial truce continued. A British officer received German permission to bury a score of British men who had been killed a week before. Working side by side, British and German soldiers dug the graves. The day after Christmas there was still no shooting, but on both sides the men remained in their trenches. On December 27, "the work of death was resumed."

It was the last happening of its kind during the war. The higher-ups on both sides severely condemned the officers involved and prohibited any further fraternizing as harmful to morale.

What does that strange bit of history mean to you? This is what it means to me: *Christmas is a symbol of the Chris-*

*tian faith in love as the ideal way of life.* Let us consider briefly the three elements of this statement: the meaning of a symbol, the meaning of faith, and the meaning of love as a way of life.

#### CHRISTMAS A SYMBOL

A symbol is something that represents something else. A handshake, for example, symbolizes friendship. A kiss means affection. A greeting card received on your birthday represents human remembrance. Every school building may be thought of as a symbol of a community's love for its children. A religious edifice, a church, is a symbol of a community's need for God.

Since our two eyes are physical, we see with them only physical things. No man has seen God; no man has seen anything spiritual. "The fruit of the Spirit," Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia, "is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." To help us grasp the reality of spiritual values we use handy symbols. One of them is Christmas.

Christmas is the symbol of a great faith. Do not get the habit of thinking of Christmas merely as the day on which Jesus was born. George Washington, the father of our country, was born on February 22, new-style calendar; but there is small chance of February 22 rivaling Christmas in popularity. Shakespeare, whose writing is second only to that in the Bible, was born on April 26; but few people even know the date. Christmas is imperishable, not because it is a birthday, even the birthday of Jesus. Indeed we do not know when Jesus was born. December 25 is almost certainly not the date. This date was not generally observed as the Lord's birthday until nearly four hundred years after his birth.

Christmas is a joyful reflection on the *meaning* of the birth of Jesus. Christmas is an eternal symbol of a faith in love as the ideal way of life.

#### THE CHRISTMAS FAITH

"Faith" is a word that has been grossly abused. It does not stand for the naïve mind characterized mainly by credulity. The best definition for faith that I know is the one used by the author of Hebrews: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith is the process by which we give reality to the things we hope for. When Tennyson said, "Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt," he proposed putting faith to work.

What does humanity most desire? What are the things "hoped for"? Without hesitation, I should say that we most want and need kindness, love, and brotherhood. But kindness, love, and brotherhood are everywhere challenged by selfishness. Let's be honest about ourselves; most of our actions are dictated by some form of self-interest.

Then suppose that every act in the world were determined solely by selfish impulses. Imagine sixty-some nations, forty-eight states in America, every member of our community, every person in our family—all dominated wholly by self-interest! In that event, we should simply have hell on earth. Kindness, love, and brotherhood are not idealistic dreams; they are essential to the very continuation of the human race. Selfishness among nations or among individuals is actually suicide.

Perhaps we are justified if in our dark moments we ask the question: "Are human beings capable of genuine love?" Yet we know the answer all the time, for it comes from the

heart of humanity. It is a moving, affirmative answer from God. And it is the Christmas faith.

Elsa Maxwell, in her syndicated column, wrote during the war about meeting an elderly woman of her acquaintance who had once grown tired of life, and showed it in every facial expression and in her posture. But when Elsa met her, she noticed that "she had on her face a smile you could have used for a foot rule." Elsa, mindful of "hags who go in for self-improvement by surgery," asked: "Have you had your face lifted?"

"O, no," the woman replied. "I've had my heart lifted—I'm working for the A.W.V.S. Canteen."

Yes, like Elsa's friend, and like the German and British soldiers in 1914, our hearts are lifted at Christmas. Dickens told the unforgettable story of Ebenezer Scrooge, whose heart was "lifted" by the spirit of Christmas. Our hearts are lifted at Christmas because our faith in the goodness of God and his human family is renewed within us. We welcome Christmas because very deeply we want peace on earth, good will to men. We celebrate Christmas as the day of brotherhood.

#### LOVE AS A WAY OF LIFE

To be realistic about our Christmas faith, we must realize that all the faith in the world may not dissolve the bitterness of men who seem not to desire peace and good will. Franz Werfel speaks of the birth of a new god, "the god of success." I am not certain how new that god is, but I am positive that throughout the world many of our generation have fallen down before it. Men have denied the true God and have cursed their fellow men by worshiping themselves and aiming only at their own material success. So-called "robber barons" have accepted material rewards as evidence of suc-

cess, regardless of the methods by which these rewards were wrung from their competitors, their workmen, or their customers. A quotation from *Escape*, a fiction best-seller of a few years ago, illustrates this type of mind. A Nazi official, discussing the condemnation abroad of the methods of his party, is quoted as saying: "It isn't necessary to be approved of; it's necessary only to be strong."

Our own nation, blessed above all other nations with material wealth, confused its wealth with its soul. As poverty gripped more and more millions of the earth's inhabitants beyond our borders, we became more and more convinced of our superiority in morals, religion, science, and economics. Pearl Harbor was only one of the rude jolts by which we are being awakened. In 1942, Franz Werfel wrote:

The present war is the logical result, no, the logical punishment for the moral dullness of the world. . . . It is my conviction that after the misery and heartbreak of war, the great intellectual discovery of the next decade will be God.

It is significant that however much men may deny in their lives the spirit of Jesus, they cannot forget him. As J. Middleton Murray put it:

Nineteen hundred years of Christianity have left Jesus, so to speak, in our bones. If we try to push him out of our minds, he is busily at work in our instincts. To ignore him, is to ignore human history and ourselves.

When a man is moved chiefly, not by self-interest, but by devotion to Christ, he is the most potent force in the world. Some men may be bought with gold, but real Christians are themselves true gold and are beyond price. True Christians are believers in love as the only way of life consistent with the Christmas message.



## VI. American Youth Face the Future

A CHAPEL TALK FOR THE BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR

TODAY'S HIGH-SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS have an unusual background. They are the children of depression and war. First, there was no outlook for their generation except the WPA. Then the war took them so fast that there was scarcely time to grow up before they were shoved into a man's job or a woman's job. There can be small wonder if many young people are still a bit dizzy. Truly, one may speak about a crisis so far as America's youth are concerned. Neither peace nor war has offered them happiness.

We are not yet so far from the thirties that we can forget the specter of unemployment. It was very hard on youth, because young people do not have experience records to help them get jobs when there is a labor surplus. One third of all the unemployment during the depression was in the age group from fifteen to twenty-four. The very highest rate of

unemployment was in the group ranging from eighteen to twenty.

Those who survive the war face a new conflict: the struggle for food and shelter, and a place in society. They remember that the nearer we came to complete military victory, the more certain was the victory of peacetime "normalcy" over wartime idealism. Long before victory, voices were loudly crying for "the good old days."

But the good old days were not good enough for America's youth. They remember that, when their fathers were out of work, the men not only were up against unemployment but up against a smug implication that if they were any good, they would not have been fired. Despite such evidence as the fact that ten million people registered for two million Civil Works jobs in the winter of 1933-1934, the unemployed were taunted with the charge that they preferred relief to work. Yet even before October, 1929, men were discharged from their jobs because machine operations were fast replacing hand operations. Just what good old days prior to the war are we to return to? Young men went to battle willingly, not because they wanted to return to good times that they never knew, but to go on to good times that they believed a free world might enjoy after victory.

The background of the present is not complete without a reminder of the sense of spiritual defeat that weighed heavily on us all throughout the nineteen-thirties. Our naïve faith in inevitable progress was severely shaken. The breakdown of the economic system was only one of the important causes, for the collapse of the international peace machinery was equally disturbing. When, in 1933, Laurence Stallings published *The First World War, A Photographic History*, his use of the word "First" was shocking but not exactly surpris-



ing. Already the great League of Nations had degenerated, in the main, to a league to preserve the gains of the European victors. The victory of 1918 seemed so hollow, so futile, that everywhere men were resolving never to fight again. Three hundred Canadian veterans at Stamford, Ontario, filed past a "tin derby" and tossed into it their world war medals, a gesture explained in this way by their chairman:

They [the medals] stand for victory in the war that was to end war. The whole world is preparing for war right now [1933]. Victory is an empty phrase. We, the victors, have as many cripples as the enemy. Our debts are as high, debts our grandchildren will be paying. . . . The victory medal is empty. We have all lost.

About this time the Oxford Union of Oxford University voted, 275 to 153, in favor of the declaration that: "This house will under no circumstances fight for its king and country." The Tory reaction was nothing short of thunderous, and the press groaned. With the whole university aroused, the proposition was put to a second vote. The declaration was reaffirmed by the overwhelming vote of 750 to 138!

Such was the prevailing mood. Capitalism had let us down. Nationalism had let us down. Moreover, there was the inevitable feeling that religion had let us down, too. *Pollyanna* at last disappeared from the library table. We discovered that the sick can die, that stories do have unhappy endings sometimes. Since religion had been thought of by many as insurance against this sort of gloom, religion was included in the general letdown of disillusionment.

Let no one hold the belief that the mood of the world from 1929 to 1939 was finally dissipated on December 7, 1941. Most people went at the war effort in the mood of

a motorist who has been stopped by a snow drift and who must be delayed while he clears the road. His "snow effort" has back of it about as much enthusiasm as the war effort of most people. Dorothy Thompson, in the spring of 1943, described the mood of the intelligent as disillusionment, the mood of the fearful as reactionism, and the mood of the majority as resignation. Speaking of the war, she quoted Santayana's definition of fanaticism, "redoubling our zeal as we lose sight of our aim."

Now we enter a new period of the twentieth century. What is the outlook for young people?

#### AS YOUNG PEOPLE LOOK AHEAD

The young men and young women who will know real happiness in the post-war world and who will be as beacons of light in the darkness of confusion will be those who, through adversity, have evolved an abiding faith in things that they believe really matter. They cannot be empty optimists; many of them have known tragedy. They cannot be empty pessimists; some of them have seen God. Right now perhaps, "perplexed in faith," they are beating their music out. When at length they come to know in whom and in what they believe, they will be like the great soul described by Shaemus O'Sheel:

He whom a dream hath possessed knoweth no more of doubting,  
For mist and the blowing of winds, and the mouthing of words  
he scorns; . . .

He whom a dream hath possessed treads the impalpable marches,  
From the dust of a day's long road he leaps to a laughing star,  
And the ruins of worlds that fall he views from eternal arches,  
And rides God's battlefields in a flashing and golden car.

To view from "eternal arches," that is the privilege of the man or woman whose soul has ripened. Clare Boothe Luce tells about a Frenchman who had been one of a few survivors in a trench at Verdun and whom she saw as France was crumbling in 1940. "Do not despair," he said. "There are no hopeless situations; there are only men who have grown hopeless about them." That is indeed a view from eternal arches!

Someone has estimated that if you imagine the Washington monument as representing the age of the world, a penny precariously balanced on its top would represent the age of man, while a thickness of tissue paper over the penny would represent the comparative age of man's civilization. The marvel is not that man does so poorly, but that man does so well. The individual with the mental and spiritual balance to live happily in the years to come will have the "long view." He will not be an easy prey to disillusionment, for he will know how to work and pray for the perfection to which he has dedicated himself but that he realizes will always elude him.

#### SOME PRACTICAL FACTORS

It is wise to observe that the happy and useful folk of the world have always had certain distinguishing traits. Take the everyday matter of disposition, for example. How many people of impeccable morals have failed because it was said of them that they "could not get along with people"! Alexander Woollcott told the story of a boy in his college fraternity who wanted all smoking in the house prohibited. He sought Woollcott's vote in the house meeting, but Woollcott declined to vote as requested. This is the amazing retort that Woollcott received: "Can you sit there and tell me that you

care absolutely nothing for Christianity?" This boy needed a definition for his Christianity, and apparently he could have used a little Christian tolerance in his life with others.

Another quality everlastingly required for success is dependability. Everybody despises the "flash-in-the-pan" kind of person, the "ninety-day-wonder." Dependability is not the same as drudgery; it simply means the habit of discharging in full the responsibilities we accept. A freshman member of the Smithville High School Dramatic Club was eager to prove his dependability. It was his first opportunity to appear in a play. Arrayed in the glory of the costume of an historical play, he was to address one line to the king. When his great moment arrived, the fledgling actor strode pompously to the center of the stage and declaimed: "My lord, my lord, I have discharged the maid."

"O you have, have you?" said the king, discovering lines never seen in the script. "Well, let me tell you that you've messed up the whole show. You've gone and done it two acts too soon!"

A remarkable example of dependability occurred at the Long Point lighthouse, ten lonely miles from Provincetown, Massachusetts. I am indebted to the *New York Times* for the story. The hero's name is Thomas Chase. He was employed to keep a light burning when it was needed and to see that the big half-ton fog bell boomed its warning when fog brought danger to fishermen and others at sea. The big bell is struck by a clapper, which is operated automatically by a mechanism first put into use in 1878. When fog shrouds the area, the lighthouse keeper is supposed to start the mechanism that strikes the bell one blow on the minute, a double blow on the half-minute, and a single blow on the minute again.

One very foggy night the machinery failed at 10:45, and repairs could not be made. Tom Chase had to make up his mind in a hurry: to let the bell fall silent, with all the risks to mariners which that would mean; or to swing that giant clapper by hand every thirty seconds until the fog lifted. It would be easy to report that the bell-ringing mechanism had broken. Surely nobody would expect a man to ring it by hand for hour after hour. But Tom realized that an excuse the next day would not save lives that night. Quickly he tied a rope to the clapper and placed his watch in front of him. Changing hands from time to time, he stayed on the job until the fog lifted the next morning at eight o'clock. Then he went to Provincetown and on to Boston for repair parts.

Fog was setting in again as he got back to the lighthouse, and from 8 p.m. until 2 p.m., when the fog cleared, Tom kept the bell clanging so punctually that no one who heard ever suspected that it was not being operated mechanically. When the lighthouse keeper went to bed, his shoulders were so sore that he could not sleep. In two nights he had swung the big clapper for over fifteen hours, 2,745 times, and had never missed a beat. That's what I mean by dependability.

Most people will be dependable in less dramatic ways: by coming to work on time; by cooking three meals a day; by doing a good job of teaching; by getting the hay into the barn before the storm breaks; by keeping the roads open when the snow drifts; by getting the passengers there safely. But however it may express itself, dependability is one of the cornerstones of success and happiness.

Another cornerstone of life is similar: the willingness to work and to work under supervision. Every September a number of high-school graduates apply for student-aid positions at our college. Those who do not appear to have finan-

cial need and those who do not appear to be good prospects for success in college are eliminated. Approximately seventy-five are selected for work in the library, in the offices, in the dormitories, and on the campus. I have watched this process year after year. Always the outcome is the same. Nearly half of those selected for jobs show within a month that they do not know what it means to work at anything, to keep regular hours, or to finish work they start. The best student workers are usually those who come from farms, where, as the American Youth Commission reports in *Youth and the Future*, there

... is still more of a "way of life" than almost any other modern way of earning a living—requiring, as it always has, ability to meet new situations and to devise new ways to conquer unexpected obstacles.

Most people learn sooner or later that life involves work, and plenty of it. If boys and girls can learn this important fact of life very early in their experience, they will have something better than a college degree. It seems strange that in America, a new land built by workers with disgust for "aristocrats," there should be a need for teaching the necessity for work. Until our generation, there was no need. It was assumed that girls would learn by actual experience how to cook, sew, launder, and take care of babies. Boys learned at home how to use tools, to do odd jobs, to raise food, to be of some account.

Then something happened. Mr. and Mrs. America moved to town and soon determined that their children must not find life as hard as they had known it. You have heard it again and again: "Bob's going to have an easier life than I have had." "Mary's not going to have to scrimp and save as I have done all my life."

The natural result was that many mothers and dads, life-long hard workers themselves, began to lift from their children the load of youthful responsibility that was in fact the apprenticeship for life. When you hear a parent say, "Mary will have to work soon enough," you know that Mary is being crippled by those who love her most. By such training, many a mother has foreordained her daughter's divorce. When a girl grows up without knowing the value of a dollar, or the necessity of controlling her temper, or the importance of everybody's doing his share of the work in a home, future failure as a wife is certain.

Every year on our campus I meet mothers who are sacrificing everything to put their daughters through college. Mother wears whatever hangs in the closet; daughter must have a new outfit every so often. Mother's hands go into the wash-tub; daughter must keep up her reading in *Love Story*. The result is a daughter who is spoiled, selfish, egotistical, and ashamed to introduce mother to her college friends. It's the same story with many boys. President Wriston of Brown University, speaking of young people, says: "We are in far more danger of killing them by mistaken kindness than by overwork." When John marries a wife or gets himself a boss, he and they will soon learn whether he has learned to work and to work under supervision.

"Haven't I told you that my child is to have everything he wants?" called a mother to the nurse when loud shrieks were heard from the nursery.

"Yes, Ma'am, he's got it," said the nurse. "It's a wasp." People who get everything they want usually get stung.

A businessman told me about a college graduate who had no particular training and no experience, and who went to the head of a corporation to apply for work. When the pres-

ident asked him what he wanted to do, he replied calmly: "I'd like to start as a vice-president."

"But this corporation already has twelve vice-presidents," the president gamely replied.

"O that's all right," the young applicant returned. "I'm not superstitious."

The successful youth in the years ahead will be one who has realized that old-fashioned hard work at something worth while is the key. Offer that to your life partner, to your employer, to your country, and there will be a place for you.

#### THE WORLD WILL GO ON

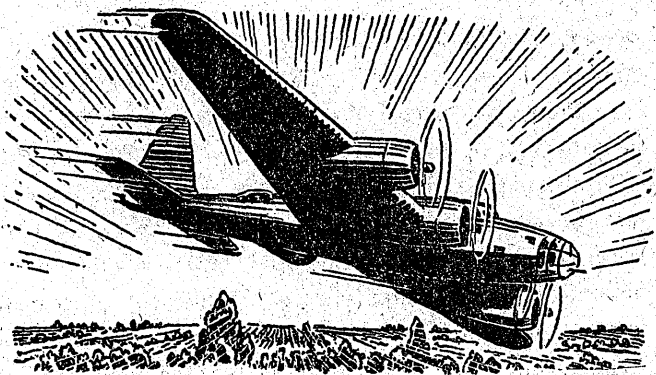
Terrible as was the destruction in which we all had some part, we surely realize that the world is going on and that its work will be done. The faithless, the undependable, the lazy, will soon fall behind in the march of humanity. The young men and young women who have survived the storms of depression and war have had tremendous opportunities to test every idea, to prove every theory, and to develop character adequate for every future need.

When it is intimated that opportunities will be scarce during the next generation or that the human spirit is doomed to defeat, I think of the aged Ralph Waldo Emerson, who attended a mass meeting in Concord when the Civil War was at its height. Feeling against the Copperheads was running high, and there was a possibility that the meeting would result in a lynching. Speaker after speaker hysterically accused the "traitor." Then Emerson walked slowly to the rostrum and, after a pause, spoke three words: "Is this—Concord?" The three words were enough, and the passion of the crowd subsided.

I should like to address a three-word question to any who



see only darkness ahead: "Are we—human?" Some of our group conduct has been more animal than human, let us confess. But to be human is to be divine. To be human is to be eternally striving to realize the God within. When a man accepts war as the natural expression of the best that is within him, he goes the whole road to atheism; he denies God. When a man refuses to forget God, however compromised his faith is by the compulsions of the moment, he remains human. We must depend for tomorrow on the men and women who turn decisively from the beast within to the God within.



## VII. Courage for Today

### A MESSAGE FOR GOOD FRIDAY

**A**S I THINK of the three years of Jesus' ministry, the years that reached an apparent end with the crucifixion, the life of Jesus impresses me most with its courage. It took courage at thirty years of age to leave an assured place in the village life of Nazareth and begin the dangerous and uncertain ministry of the kingdom of God. It took courage to step out from among the unthinking multitude and accept the challenge of John the Baptist. And when the tempter demanded that Jesus direct his talents toward unworthy goals, courage was required to retort: "Get thee hence, Satan." Every day of his three-year ministry required constant courage; for his central message, so simple and appealing to us, aroused a storm of opposition.

It is a sad commentary on human institutions that a man who taught a religion of love of God and love of one's fellow men should be damned by organized religion, and that a man who taught the native citizenship in the kingdom of

God of all who practice brotherhood should be executed as a traitor by organized government. It is not surprising that, now and then, the calm of Jesus' spiritual teaching was interrupted by such flashes of anger as these words he addressed to those he called "blind leaders of the blind": "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell!" Branded publicly as irreligious and unpatriotic, he had the choice either of playing safe and going back to the carpenter's bench or proceeding with his God-given mission. However much his friends and his relatives might have wished his personal safety, it was never an open question with Jesus. "Get thee behind me, Satan," he firmly advised Peter when Peter counseled the safe way. "Behold, let us go up to Jerusalem," he said, "where I shall be betrayed by my friends and murdered by my enemies." And so saying, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

Such courage is not ordinary; men do not ordinarily advance to meet defeat. No small boy ever ran toward home when he knew that punishment awaited him; criminals never put the noose around their own necks. But the world notes when a man puts his cause first and himself last. "Behold, I go up to the British camp," Nathan Hale might have declared, "where I shall likely be discovered and executed." Socrates showed that same quality of life when he spurned flight by night and drank the fatal hemlock cup, rather than break the law of the land. When the Christian world reflects on the meaning of life, let it consider the courage of the Savior.

Let no one minimize the courage of Jesus by affirming that he wanted to die. He was unlike another young man of thirty-three, Lord Byron, who wrote in his journal:

Tomorrow is my birthday—that is to say, at twelve of the clock

midnight, in twelve minutes, I shall have completed thirty and three years of age! And I go to my bed with a heaviness of heart at having lived so long and to so little purpose. It is three minutes past twelve and I am now thirty-three.

And then Byron composed this quatrain:

Through life's road so dim and dirty,  
I have dragged to three and thirty.  
What have these years left to me?  
Nothing, except thirty-three.

When Jesus was thirty-three, his work well started; death was the last thing he wanted. His acceptance of death was the conclusion to a terrific struggle in his own soul. "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me," was his prayer of agony in Gethsemane. But death was planted in the middle of the road of duty; "not my will but thine be done." There was no detour.

We are grateful for the experience of many men who have shown us how to die. Our dread of the inevitable was expressed by Shakespeare when he had Hamlet, contemplating death by suicide, exclaim:

... the dread of something after death—the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns—puzzles the will, and makes us rather bear those ills we have than fly to others that we know not of.

The memory of Robert Louis Stevenson is precious. Stevenson was always sickly. Although he traveled for twenty years in search of health, lung hemorrhages accompanied him everywhere. Finally he found an island in the South Seas, where he felt better than anywhere else in the world. Making friends with the natives, writing his undying literary works,

he spent his last years there. He was only forty-four when he died, but he left for his epitaph these daring words:

Under the wide and starry sky,  
Dig the grave and let me lie,  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.

Another English author leaves an inspiring memory of heroism. William Ernest Henley wrote his celebrated poem, "Invictus," in a hospital bed in Edinburgh. Far from his home, facing the amputation of his second foot, with life itself uncertain, this twenty-four-year old poet wrote these bold lines:

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.  
In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

The world will never forget the courage of the Scott expedition to the South Pole. Captain Oates, a strong Oxford University man, fell into a crevice while pulling the supply sled, breaking his leg so that he had to be pulled by the others. It made return impossible for any of the expedition. One night he limped out of the tent, saying: "I am going out; I may not be back." Despite this self-sacrifice, the whole party died in the Antarctic wastes. Captain Scott wrote a letter to Sir James Barrie, which was found on Scott's body. He had written:

Goodbye, I am not at all afraid of the end but sad to miss many a simple pleasure which I had planned for the future in our

marches. We are in a desperate state—feet frozen, no fuel, and a long way from food—but it would do your heart good to be in our tent to hear our songs and our cheery conversation. [Later—and the words become difficult to read.] We are very near the end. We did intend to finish ourselves when things proved like this, but we have decided to die naturally instead.

Thus heroes die.

World War II added many names to our roll call of heroes in death. Every death in battle is the death of a man who has put himself last, his cause first. One of the most stirring dispatches from Europe was one that Frederick Graham sent the *New York Times*. The dispatch concerned the return to England of an American bomber badly damaged in an attack on Germany. The co-pilot had been killed, and the pilot was very badly wounded. Taking turns, the engineer and the navigator managed to pilot the Fortress back to the home field in England. One was on his second mission, the other on his third. Neither had ever flown a plane; they had only observed how the pilots operated the giant ship of the air. And they were completely lost when the time came to bring the "Fort" down. For two hours they circled the field, while the officers of the station attempted to help them. Another Fortress was sent up to fly alongside the homing plane to demonstrate how to regulate speed, how and when to lower the wheels. But the effort failed; the radio from the coaching plane could not be picked up. Finally the order came from the control tower to set a course for the sea and for the entire crew to parachute to the field.

"I think the pilot is still alive, sir. We can't leave him in the plane," came back the reply.

After a hurried huddle the officers had the order repeated: "Hit the silk!"

But the stubborn engineer came back with this: "I think the pilot is alive, sir, and I believe I can land the plane after the others jump. I'd like to try, sir."

Again the order was given to bail out at once. But from the death cabin above the field there came back this third appeal: "If you desire, we'll do it, sir; but I'd like to try to land, because I think the pilot is still alive."

And so it was ordered. The crew jumped to safety, while the engineer and the navigator stayed with the wounded pilot. The big "Fort" went into a landing glide, hit the tops of a row of trees—and crashed. Three dead men were found in the wreckage. They had graduated from this life with high honors.

When Jesus calmly remarked, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, where I shall be betrayed and condemned to death," he left an unexcelled example of a man who had mastered his fears. Much of the harm done in the world is done by fear. Fear takes a fearful toll of human happiness. The great challenge of modern psychology, as well as of religion, is that man must be master of his fears. Yet there is one fear that is noble and honorable. It is a fear that every conscientious man and woman feels daily. The only noble fear is fear of failure to do one's duty. Fear that failure above all else. Many of the things we fear in life are not concerned with honor or with character. We fear death, for instance; but death is not dishonorable. We fear illness, but that again is not dishonorable. We fear our failure to do our duty; and we fear it rightly, for failure to do one's duty is failure indeed. That failure is a failure of character.

In large part, it is courage that prevents such failure. "If to do were only as easy as to know what to do . . .," moans Portia to Nerissa in the *Merchant of Venice*. We can see

what John Galsworthy meant when he said that courage is even more important than love. It is courage that transforms the wish into the act, the prayer into the answer, the creed into the deed, the vision into the accomplishment. Without courage, the dreams of a Christ would be idle visions; with courage, they become the salvation of the world. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem," to be killed! It was Calvary that preached the Sermon on the Mount.

Everybody knows this stanza of Edmund Vance Cooke:

Death comes with a crawl, or comes with a pounce,  
And whether he's slow or sly,  
It isn't the fact that you're dead that counts,  
But only, how did you die?

Courage! The courage that is needed three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. Life is hopeless without it.

We need courage today both for death and for life. We need great courage to help create a new world order in religion, education, philosophy, economics, and patriotism. Weak hearts have small part in the reconstruction and salvation of the world. Greville said: "Most men have even more courage than they themselves think they have." Thank God that this is true, for the road ahead demands intelligent convictions courageously defended. And thank God for the memory, the example, and the help of Jesus, who, finding death in the road of duty, hesitated not in his decision: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem!"





## VIII. The Endless Significance of Easter

### A CHAPEL TALK FOR THE EASTER SEASON

WE CELEBRATE EASTER because of strange events in Palestine nearly two thousand years ago. Jesus, a young Jewish carpenter, left his shop and began to assume a place of leadership in the religious life of his people. His unorthodox opinions and actions soon aroused the angry opposition of the leaders of both Church and State. He came from the frontier region, he was unordained, he was not theologically trained; yet he dared to oppose the most powerful groups in the society of his time. Gradually, his enemies came to a common understanding. Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Herodians, and Romans all felt themselves to have been insulted and flouted. Jesus was arrested and hastily condemned to death. They crucified him between two thieves—a piteous spectacle of men killing, on one hand, those who had not caught up to the average standards of the time, and killing, on the other hand, the Son of God, who so far exceeded those standards that, judged by them, he was a criminal.

Society was busy on Good Friday, killing its enemies. But one they did not kill that day: God. And because God lives, there are some things that never die. Bewildered men discovered that they could not kill Jesus the Christ. Although Jesus be crucified daily, Christ will ever rise to glorify God and his kingdom. On Easter, we give thanks for the fact of the resurrection and rejoice in the knowledge that Jesus lives.

In a larger sense, Easter is not merely the celebration of an event of 27 or 29 A.D., however marvelous that event was. The meaning of Easter is beyond time and place. It is similar in one sense to our national Independence Day. When we celebrate on the fourth of July, we are not celebrating something that happened in 1776; we are celebrating the continuous benefits of a virtually timeless event. That is the reason for Easter. The lesson taught the world by the first Easter is of permanently fresh significance.

The question we must answer, if we would participate intelligently in the Easter celebration, is this: "What does Easter mean in terms of fundamental faith?" The primary reason for Easter is, of course, the fact that Christ arose from the dead. But what does that mean in the broad language of faith for all people of all time?

Like Christmas and Good Friday, Easter is first of all a revelation of God. For all Christians, Easter is not so much a milestone as a thousand-mile stone on the road to confidence in God. The underlying purpose of all that Jesus did must be sought in the revelation of God that he achieved. Jesus said: "He who hath seen me hath seen the Father."

The Easter faith is not primarily that Christ arose, but the faith that, with God as he is, the resurrection of Christ was inevitable. When Christ burst the bonds of the grave, men

learned that some things are not destined to die. Believers in Easter know that the only permanent elements in this world are spiritual and righteous. They believe that because, through Christ, they have come to believe that the very God of the universe is both spiritual and righteous.

Translated into replies to the questions of the human soul, the Easter faith has two chief implications:

1. To the degree that men partake of the Christlike nature, they, like him, are indestructible, even when death is the destroyer.

Our echoes roll from soul to soul  
And grow for ever and for ever.

This, of course, is the faith of idealism. Materialism, affirming that there are no more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in its philosophy of the physical, denies the existence of God, the human soul, and even the freedom of the will. Materialism comes into the birth room with an insult and into the death room with a sneer. Comfort or hope it gives no one; yet it can no more be proved scientifically than the ancient Christian faith in the spiritual. Easter demonstrates the persistence of the spiritual and the righteous.

It was in the vein of this Easter faith that Bartolomeo Vanzetti wrote his famous defiance of death. Condemned to death unjustly because of his radicalism, as he and many others believed, this Italian immigrant, near the end of his seven-year agony of waiting, wrote:

If it had not been for these things, I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's under-

standing of man as now we do by accident. Our words—our lives—our pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler—all! That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph!

2. The resurrection of Jesus is the justification for the faith that the purposes of God are never permanently defeated. That is why men say that one with God is a majority. That is why the martyrs and the disappointed idealists of all times have declared: "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." That is what Tennyson meant when he wrote: "Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs." That is what Browning meant when he had Abt Vogler assert: "There shall never be one lost good!"

The world is sadly in need of the Easter faith now. Pessimism hangs like a fog over the aspiring Christian idealism of the world. But, piercing the darkness, the assuring voice of the risen Christ comes to us: "Be not afraid. Lo, I am with you always." With this faith to guide us, Christians will not greatly fear for the purposes of God. His purposes may be thwarted, delayed, but the "increasing purpose" is sure.

"The Lord hath risen indeed, and hath appeared to" all who have souls to believe and eyes to see.



## IX. Unfinished Victory

AN ADDRESS FOR "I-AM-AN-AMERICAN DAY"

GERMANY AND JAPAN never were anything but *secondary* enemies of the American people. The *primary* enemies, wholly responsible for World War II, remain to be defeated. Until they are defeated, or at least drastically checked, our victory over Germany and Japan is an unfinished victory.

High-school and college students should become well acquainted with these enemies. They took your fathers to war; they hurled your classmates from study to conflict; and later they will claim the lives of your children, unless we proceed from victory over Germany and Japan to victory over much more dangerous enemies.

The identity of these worst enemies is not hidden. Every thoughtful person saw them directly behind the menacing figures of Germany and Japan. They have played Iago to Othello. Their defeat is the world's next war—a peacetime war in which every human being must be a willing soldier.

Perhaps the most terrible enemy of our generation is inter-

national anarchy. Close to it in power for evil is economic confusion. The third great enemy of humanity is one that turns international anarchy and economic confusion into bitterness and hatred; it is intolerance.

I want to suggest the responsibility of young American citizens for the war after victory, the continued struggle against our enemies—the most important of which we could not even reach before the defeat of Germany and Japan.

#### INTERNATIONAL ANARCHY

You should be informed about the great effort, made in 1919, to organize the world for peace—somewhat as the nation, the state, and the community are organized for peace within their limited borders. The League of Nations is certain to become known as the John the Baptist of international co-operation—the forerunner, the proclaimer of something better to follow. Not only Woodrow Wilson, but millions of other hopeful Americans were crushed by the failure of the United States to support the first great project in world organization for peace. At St. Louis, in September, 1919, President Wilson made this pathetic statement and prophecy about the imminent refusal of the United States to give its tremendous strength and prestige to the world's first real effort for peace:

I feel like asking the Secretary of War to get the boys, who went across the water to fight, together on some field where I could go and see them, and I would stand up before them and say: "Boys, I told you before you went across the seas that this was a war against wars, and I did my best to fulfill the promise, but I am obliged to come to you in mortification and shame and say I have not been able to fulfill the promise. You are betrayed. You fought for something that you did not get. And the glory of the armies and the navies of the United States is gone like a dream in the night, and there ensues upon it, in the suitable darkness of the

night, the nightmare of dread which lay upon the nations before this war came; and there will come some time, in the vengeful Providence of God, another struggle in which, not a few hundred thousand fine men from America will have to die, but as many millions as are necessary to accomplish the final freedom of the peoples of the world."

Whether our joining the League of Nations would have prevented World War II, I cannot say; but I know that the decision of the United States to "sit out the peace" was an invitation to every nation to "go it alone." From 1919 to 1939, each of the major powers developed the emotions and the agencies of nationalism. The dream of a peaceful world that ten million men had died for after 1914 was lost in the dream of leaders for empire. Britain and France increased their control over subject peoples as a result of the war. The United States spent fifty thousand young lives and became the world's wealthiest nation. Japan and Italy, also on the winning side, increased their empires, although only enough to make them bitterly envious of England, France, and the United States. Germany, embarrassed by defeat, remained proud and ambitious, still convinced that its eighty million people had as much right to empire as England's forty-five million people.

The storm that broke over the world in 1939 was developing over two decades. It could have surprised no one. William Ernest Hocking summed it up as simply as this:

'The era of empire building was bound to ripen into an era of wars among empires and empire-aspirants. That is where we are today.

And Cordell Hull gave this explanation:

Nationalism, run riot between the last war and this war, defeated all attempts to carry out indispensable measures of international economic and political action; encouraged and facilitated

the rise of dictators; and drove the world straight toward the present war. . . .

This is the history that must help form our policies now. The big question is whether the world has yet learned its lesson, whether devotion to narrow nationalism continues to blind the earth's millions to the necessity for co-operation. Apparently, we are slowly learning that no nation can "go it alone." Germany was not able to do it; nor was Japan. Britain seems to have succeeded, but the history of the first half of the twentieth century does not promise much for the second half.

Many of our citizens believe that the Pacific should be an American lake and the Atlantic an American pond. General Patton spoke of England and the United States ruling the world, and an Assistant Secretary of the Navy told a House committee that we "have the largest Navy the world has ever known. . . . This force by itself can police the world."

The difficulty is that, when one man sets himself up as the community policeman, he is necessarily regarded by the people as a gangster. A policeman is a policeman only because his authority is representative. Self-appointed policemen, Germany and Japan have learned, sooner or later bring down on themselves the combined power of all believers in law and order. Our nation is not immune from the workings of this principle.

Bernard Baruch spoke as a true elder statesman when he warned:

We are the most powerful nation in the world. . . . It is my prayer that our conduct may always be such as to carry greater praise in the accolade: "I am an American."

Only the future can tell whether the American people have



the character to balance their power. No other nation has ever had comparable power without a hardening of its sympathies and a softening of its sense of obligation to weaker nations.

Have you heard about the two men walking down a lane? One had a slingshot, and he proved his aim by bringing down an apple and later a flower. Then the friend asked: "Can you hit that beehive?"

"Yes," replied the marksman, "but I won't—they're organized."

Of course, that's the answer to international anarchy. Had the world been organized for peace, Hitler could not have picked off Austria, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Holland, Belgium, Norway, France, like a slingshot expert on the loose. I lose no dignity in my acquiescence in community law and order; I gain in peace of mind and personal security by accepting power chosen democratically. Professor Hocking makes this analogy clear:

International law has no chance unless we see that states are sovereign not because they are above all law but because, like mature men, they have sense enough to observe law. . . .

Perhaps we can see how, in a larger sense, England and the United States are as much to blame for World War II as Germany and Japan. Although not wanting war, the chief victors of the last war stupidly let the world drift into catastrophe. In *Prelude to Victory*, James Reston says of our country:

We wanted to export our goods but we did not want to import the goods of other nations, and that was not only economic foolishness but it was incompatible with both justice and freedom. We wanted peace, but we did not want to co-operate with other nations to maintain that peace. We wanted to restrain the aggressors,

but we did not want to maintain the armies and take the chances that alone will restrain aggressors.

The younger citizens of the world will finally decide whether there is to be a terrible third world war. If, in this country, they cast their ballots for a party that believes, as Dorothy Thompson describes it, "that America alone is God's country," then, as Miss Thompson and I both see things: "We should eventually have the whole world ganged up against us." "There cannot be two 'invincible' powers in the world," William Henry Chamberlain reminds us. The defeat of international anarchy will not be easy, but it should be easier because of the world's recent experiences in making war and peace.

#### ECONOMIC CONFUSION

The second of our worst enemies is closely connected to our first; economic confusion has been part of the general picture of world anarchy. C. F. Hughes, staff writer for the business section of the *New York Times*, has traced the interrelation of world business and world politics in this interesting way:

... after the last war (1914-1918) our political functionaries crossed off the League of Nations and World Court and under "normalcy" hiked the tariff walls and propped up exports with billions in loans to climb those walls. In many instances we gave away both our money and our goods.

Out of this procedure we reaped the inevitable results. It may be oversimplifying the outcome to put it this way, but we drove the world bankrupt.

It is straining no facts to trace World War II to demoralized currencies, which in turn were brought about by unsound trade policies, unsound loans, unsound budgets, unemployment, and finally the managed economies and the war preparations that pro-

vided the work otherwise lacking in the countries most seriously affected. The hated leaders easily took their cues from economic chaos.

It is clear that, if the peoples of the earth are to have any peace and security, the economic confusion that helped produce World War II must not be created again. Unfortunately, most people do not see the relation between depressions and wars, between wars and depressions. Our young leaders have a chance to do some honest thinking and acting on this point, and the time to begin is now!

In the difficult years following World War I, several important nations discarded their traditional capitalist or feudal-capitalist economies in favor of Fascism or Communism. Our country had its economic distress, but it had the wealth to borrow its way through ten years. War then relieved the tension through incredibly heavy governmental borrowing and spending. The war, in this sense, was a grand WPA project.

The disturbing truth is that we have not yet reached any sort of general agreement about our economic problems. Unemployment can do almost anything to a nation. Back of the alarm on this point among informed persons is the knowledge of the amazing increase of industrial output per hour per man during the war. When we realize what was produced without the services of the twelve million men in uniform, we can properly wonder how we can ever consume enough to keep all the machines going and all the men employed during the years to come.

Foreign trade is not the whole answer. More than ever before, we are having to buy from those to whom we sell. The war forced the industrialization of new parts of the world; Mexico, Brazil, Australia, even China and India are

not so completely dependent on the "great" powers for their every industrial need. Following the rebuilding of the industrial systems of England, Russia, France, Japan, and Germany, the great undamaged productive capacity of the United States will require careful adjustment to national and international needs.

It is plain that sentimental longing for the good old days of McKinley and Hanna will not solve the problems of mid-twentieth-century times. Generally speaking, the American system of private enterprise served the nation well for a century. Granted that the profits were not ideally distributed, the system itself held and still holds the confidence of a great majority of our people.

But the capitalist system has not gained any prestige in the second quarter of the present century. Most thinking people, still loyal, are questioning, wondering, waiting. If capitalism is not some day to be replaced with something—state socialism is the only apparent alternative—two reforms, already well under way, must be advanced:

1. Owen D. Young, for many years the great organizing genius behind General Electric, stated the first great reform in capitalist thinking: "Slowly we are learning that low wages for labor do not necessarily mean high profits for capital." A famous friend of business, the eminent historian, James Truslow Adams, phrased it this way:

Business is beginning to realize that perhaps business—and the position of business men in the social group—can be saved only by benefiting and not exploiting the masses. There is no profit in production if there is no market in which to sell.

2. The second indispensable reform concerns the thinking of businessmen regarding their place in our social and economic system.

Who works harder or with more devotion to his responsibilities than the family physician? He knows that, even in the best years, his income will not exceed a few thousand dollars. I am an educator; my aim is to make the college that I head the finest college it can become. Do I shorten my hours or slacken my efforts because I know that success for the college will mean little or nothing to me in terms of dollar reward? The fact is that most Americans work hard all their days without the incentive of the profit motive, as businessmen understand it. Teachers, ministers, dentists, farmers, laborers, lawyers, plumbers, miners, clerks, aviators, governmental employees—they all get considerable satisfaction from life, even though they never expect to make much money. They are wise enough to know, of course, that business profits make capital and that capital makes business, which in turn makes employment.

The "gripe" of many people not in business is that the businessman, working with a philosophy of success unlike any other in the nation, has an unwarranted estimate of his own worth to society. What is success? The businessman is forced to answer in terms of dollars—dollars that, he explains, go to support the teachers and ministers and others incapable of the exacting life of business. Not all businessmen, by any means, choose to feel this way about themselves, but the system makes it hard for the most successful among them to feel and act otherwise. That is why the second necessary reform for a continuing capitalism is the deflection of profits from excessive private gain to the increase of wages and social insurance.

How sad it is therefore, at the present time, for the United States, of all nations, to raise the world's biggest crop of reaction. Surely the Tory leadership in England is more enlightened than in the United States; there the Conservatives

have made clear that the masses must share, as never before, in whatever prosperity the nation enjoys. Dean William F. Russell believes that the Soviet Union and England have both been scared into progressive thought; "each barely escaped annihilation." But the United States, not having known enough even about Pearl Harbor to get a real fright, comes out of the war so unharmed that Tory leaders have little patience with progressive thought.

What a wonderful opportunity to serve a democratic nation! Our economic confusion is a challenge to young, educated leaders to dare to think, to investigate, and finally to assume responsibility for an evolutionary change from confusion to economic freedom and world peace.

#### RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

I am ashamed to speak to Americans about racial and religious intolerance, the third powerful enemy of democracy and peace. The American ideal is a nation united through freedom; through the grateful loyalty of men and women who are permitted to speak, work, and worship as they please. The Hitler way was unity through uniformity; the American way is unity through diversity. Yet, in the name of Americanism, some alleged Americans indicate their belief in the inferiority of all Americans whose color is unlike their own, whose ancestors came from a different nation than their own, who belong to a different church, who have different thoughts and interests.

An enthusiastic war against intolerance at home is now being waged, for there is little consistency in a military war against Fascism if we tolerate its worst aspects at home. The barring of Jews from employment in Berlin was no worse and no better than the barring of Negroes from employment

in American cities. All kinds of people from everywhere came to the shores of the New World and worked together to create our nation. Unless we wish to re-create all the Old World castes, jealousies, injustices, and intolerances, the new generation of American citizens must believe in and practice genuine American brotherhood toward fellow citizens unlike themselves. The glory of America is that nothing is supposed to count in evaluating a man except his character and, in a broad sense, the quality of his citizenship.

#### IN CONCLUSION

I have painted no picture of world perfection, for the victory over Germany and Japan is an unfinished victory. Unless we can defeat international anarchy, economic confusion, and intolerance, we shall not only have misery at home but strife abroad as soon as another generation of warriors can be produced. The whole nation must remain united for these new wars of peacetime, but the leadership must come from the citizens educated in our schools and colleges.



## X. The Ancient Laws of Life

### A COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

THE THINGS WE BELIEVE in are, in the main, the product of our experience with life. To have a faith it is not necessary, of course, for each individual to have experienced everything. I can know that poison will kill me without having to die from poisoning. So with the spiritual side of life; one may learn vicariously as well as directly. The product of experience with life is a set of hypotheses that amounts to faith. When they have been tested long enough, they become the laws of life. Men have been testing their hypotheses for a long time, long enough for people of good sense to believe that there are fundamental laws in the universe affecting more than the familiar fields of science. These faiths are what I am calling "The Ancient Laws of Life."

#### EVERYTHING IS IMMORTAL

One of the things men have surely learned in the last six thousand years is that nothing is ever lost for long. A person



who thinks otherwise is simply childish, lacking experience with life. Have you ever watched a cloud "kill" the moon? You who have seen it happen again and again are not surprised when you see the moon shine again another night, or even a few minutes later the same night. But a sensitive child, observing the moon carefully for the first time, lacking the faith that is born of experience, might feel that the cloud had actually killed the moon. The same thing is true of the roses that delight us with their beauty. You and I know that, when the frost ends their beauty, there will be roses again another year. A child learning life's lessons, developing his stock of faiths, might not be so certain. The man who has the "long look" over the experience of his kind with life knows that nothing is ever lost forever.

Take the important matter of human liberty, for example. Have you known a tyrant to destroy liberty? You have seen nothing new under the sun, for tyrants have been destroying liberty for thousands of years. It has been done again and again from the dim beginnings of democracy in Greece and Rome down to the threatened extinction of democracy by Hitler and his cohorts in our time. With every attempt, the shortsighted go into panic. If they were wise, they would know that the human spirit cannot be killed. It can be crushed to earth, but it will always rise again. The creative spirit of man seems destined to be free; it always has been free.

No evil force can repeal the constitution of the universe. It is a poor historian who is not a philosopher, and James Truslow Adams speaks as a good historian when he concludes: "Taking the race as a whole, we have gone ahead and slipped back, to pick ourselves up and go farther ahead." Jesus dies on the cross, but the kingdom of God lives on.

Socrates perishes a victim of bigotry, but the spirit of free inquiry is not touched. Galileo is disgraced, but the scientific method continues to reveal new truth. Tyndale is burned at the stake, but God's holy word is not consumed. The law of life appears to be that, while men may come and men may go, some of them useful and some harmful, God marches on!

#### SUFFERING CANNOT BE AVOIDED

While men are assured that the things that really matter are indestructible, that extreme pessimism is a product of ignorance, they are not at the same time assured of a life of freedom from pain. Job and all his friends thought that, if a man were simply good enough, he would escape trouble; but when Job had really experienced life, he concluded painfully: "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward"—just that surely, inevitably. One of America's great golf players told a group of amateurs: "Make up your mind early in the game to accept some bad luck as part of the game."

When people talk about the wars of the twentieth century as if they were unique in history, they simply betray their ignorance. Sadly one must say it, but this is life as usual. Glance over six thousand years of history. Always the pleasant is alternated with the bitter, or the two are mixed. Bring to mind the faith of our fathers in this land of liberty. They endured eight years of suffering in order to win the freedom to govern themselves and the freedom for us to govern ourselves. Think of our grandfathers enduring for four years the greatest war in history prior to 1914 to insure that the nation should be united forever. Remember that, twice in our own time, we have been forced into wars to prevent the strangulation from without of the democracy we have been trying to achieve within.

I can scarcely believe now the naïve notion that my college generation of the twenties blithely accepted. We lived in that giddy period after the war when the League of Nations was the white hope of idealists the world over. We believed that all the sweat, blood, and tears were in the history books. We assumed that peace and prosperity were to be ours forever and ever—amen! Winston Churchill was smart enough to tell us then that the world was only in a temporary state of "blessed exhaustion." Actually, as we were to discover later, we were enjoying the armistice period between two parts of the same world war.

Then at last, as it does to all men, pain came to us. We were not, after all, a charmed generation, immune from suffering. What Walter Lippmann said of American territory could be said of Americans in general. He referred to the "American myth that nature has conferred some kind of magical immunity on American territory." There is no "magical immunity" to anything in life.

Just as we are positive that important things do not perish, so have we learned the reason for their immortality: it is the presence of something within the human heart that sees to it that worth-while things are preserved, whatever the cost.

#### WORK IS ESSENTIAL

One of the ancient laws of life is that work is essential to an individual or to a nation if life is to have dignity and meaning. I once read about a girl on Long Island who had been arrested forty times for speeding. She had paid fines totaling seven hundred dollars. At length the judge felt the time had come for a good, fatherly lecture; and he talked to her about the waste of rubber and gasoline, and the dangers involved in speeding. When he had finished, the girl asked:

"But, Judge, what else is there to do around here?" That girl would have asked the same question whether she was living in Manhattan or in the smallest hamlet in West Virginia. A person who asks, "What is there to do around here?" betrays complete purposelessness. The place is not important at all; a person with a purpose finds plenty to do anywhere.

One of my favorite Bible quotations is one that is seldom quoted. It is this: "And all the days of Methusaleh were 969 years, and he died." That's a complete biography. Methusaleh was noted for having more birthdays than anybody else. How different that American officer in France in 1918 who yelled to his men: "Come on, you ———! Do you want to live forever?"

There is no place in the world today for the type known as the "playboy." In wartime, a playboy is a traitor; in the hard days of reconstruction, a playboy is a criminal. In our world, laziness is as criminal as thievery.

Mark Twain reported an interesting conversation with an English nobleman during a dinner in London:

"You Americans are a wonderful people," said the nobleman. "But you do not have aristocrats, as we have here, have you?"

"Just what do you mean by aristocrats?" Twain asked.

"Well," explained the Englishman, "an aristocrat is a person who has time to travel, who has no business to look after, who is not required to work for a living."

"Oh," said Mark Twain, "we have plenty of that kind in America—only we call them tramps."

Yes, we do. The American way of life is the way of hard work. And we believe that recent history confirms this pioneer doctrine. While Germany substituted guns for butter—for obvious reasons—France substituted politics for patriotism, and England substituted business profits and the long

week end for an honest facing of the facts. America substituted "ease in Zion" for an intelligent participation in the affairs of the world. For four years France was a has-been; England narrowly escaped disaster; and the United States had its worst scare since Valley Forge.

#### NOTHING IS EVER FINISHED

The idealist is always acutely aware of the truth that nothing is ever finished. He knows that this truth is one of the ancient laws of life. Men of low aim are quick to declare the completion of their projects. For this reason James Russell Lowell declared: "Not failure, but low aim, is crime." The girl who practices faithfully in preparation for a piano recital will be wise to be pleased but not satisfied. Lincoln Steffens emphasized this point. When a student learns that the historians differ, Steffens said, he learns the truth that history is not finished; when one hears the babel of the theologians, one knows that religion is not complete.

Powerful influences in our nation today dare to discourage any attempt to create a world better than we knew between 1919 and 1939. They are calling for sky-high tariff walls, government by business, and irresponsible nationalism. These influences are the voice of inexperience. They flout the ancient law that nothing is ever finished; they worship the god of *status quo*.

Everything in this world today cries aloud for improvement, for intelligence, for devotion to high aims. Nothing is finished.

#### GOD IS REAL

Fundamental to all the ancient laws of life is this: God is real. When Anthony Adverse was a boy, he worked in the office of a shipping company. He noticed that, whenever a

ship was scheduled to set sail, the listing was accompanied by these words: "*Deo volente*." Turning to Toussaint, a skeptically minded Frenchman who worked in the office, young Anthony inquired the meaning of the words.

"God willing," explained Toussaint.

"What has God to do with all this?" continued the boy.

"It is a pious word for wind," came the answer.

There was a time when our generation seemed to think that "God" was a pious word for windy preachers to use on the Sabbath day. "God," many thought, was a word that would soon be listed in the dictionary as obsolescent, if not quite obsolete.

But our generation has learned that God is real. The victors of the last war, or the first part of the second war, came up against the stern reality of God. They had to bleed again to regain the opportunity they threw away in 1919—the opportunity to remake the world along lines of equality and justice. When victory came before, the victors mistook it for peace. For twenty years England and the United States lived in a fool's paradise of selfishness and stupidity. Shirking the victor's responsibility, they lived only for themselves. Then the judgment of God came upon them. Hitler was no caprice of history, no accident in time; he was the judgment of God upon the sins of the mighty.

There are other ancient laws of life, but these are the laws that seem most relevant to the experience of our time:

1. The indestructibility of things that really matter.
2. The inevitability of suffering.
3. The necessity of work.
4. The perpetually unfinished state of civilization.
5. The reality of God.

"IN SUCH AN AGE!"

Who would ask to be excused from living in days like these? We do no violence to Angela Morgan's philosophy when we apply her famous lines to our time,

To be alive in such an age!  
To live in it!  
To give in it!  
Rise, soul, from thy despairing knees, . . .

Let us say of life what Browning said of death: "Let me taste the whole of it."

Have you heard the story of William Lancaster McLaughlin, "Willie" McLaughlin? It is an old story now but a true one, and one that ought not to be forgotten. William was a student in Ohio Wesleyan University, and he went to Chicago during the Christmas holidays to visit his uncle. One day he went to the Iroquois Theater. He had not been in the gallery of that theater for more than ten minutes when fire broke out. William was near a fire escape and was about to descend to safety when he heard the screams of panic-stricken women. He saw that painters in the building across a narrow alley were trying to get a connecting ladder into the theater. This was William's opportunity to help.

He secured the ladder on the theater side and started to help the women to safety. A large man was determined to be the first to cross, and William had to knock him down. In the meantime planks were placed between the two buildings, and William, acting as a volunteer traffic director, piloted twenty-six women and children across the improvised bridge.

All the while the flames were soaring higher and higher, and William was having great difficulty to beat out the fire from his own clothing while he helped others to get out of

danger. The drama soon came to a tragic conclusion; for the men who had been forced to wait finally stampeded for the fire escape, and everybody crashed to the street three floors below.

William lived twenty-eight hours. Once he mumbled: "I guess I'm nearly burned up." It was the truth. Before he died, he made this remarkable statement:

I have thought it all out. Some men get their chance at sixty; some get their chance at forty; some at thirty. I had my chance at eighteen, and I am happy.

Did William mean that he was happy to die at eighteen? Certainly not. People who are normal never get so old that they want life to end; so a boy on the threshold of life surely would not welcome death. William meant that each life is intended to be useful. Some men reach their greatest usefulness late in life, others in middle life. This college boy was called on to be of great service at the age of eighteen.

Among the things that are immortal are chivalry, devotion to duty, sacrifice. They are immortal because of the God within us causing us to see that they do not perish, however great the cost to us.

Life comes to us with great opportunities to be useful, interesting experiences to be lived. Life is varied, and we shall welcome its marvelous varieties. Life is uncertain, and we shall be spurred by curiosity. The old Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, said something that sums it up: "May death find me thanking God for life—and unafraid."



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